



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Tappan Presbyterian Association
LIBRARY.

Presented by

J. Huff Jones
Detroit

1111

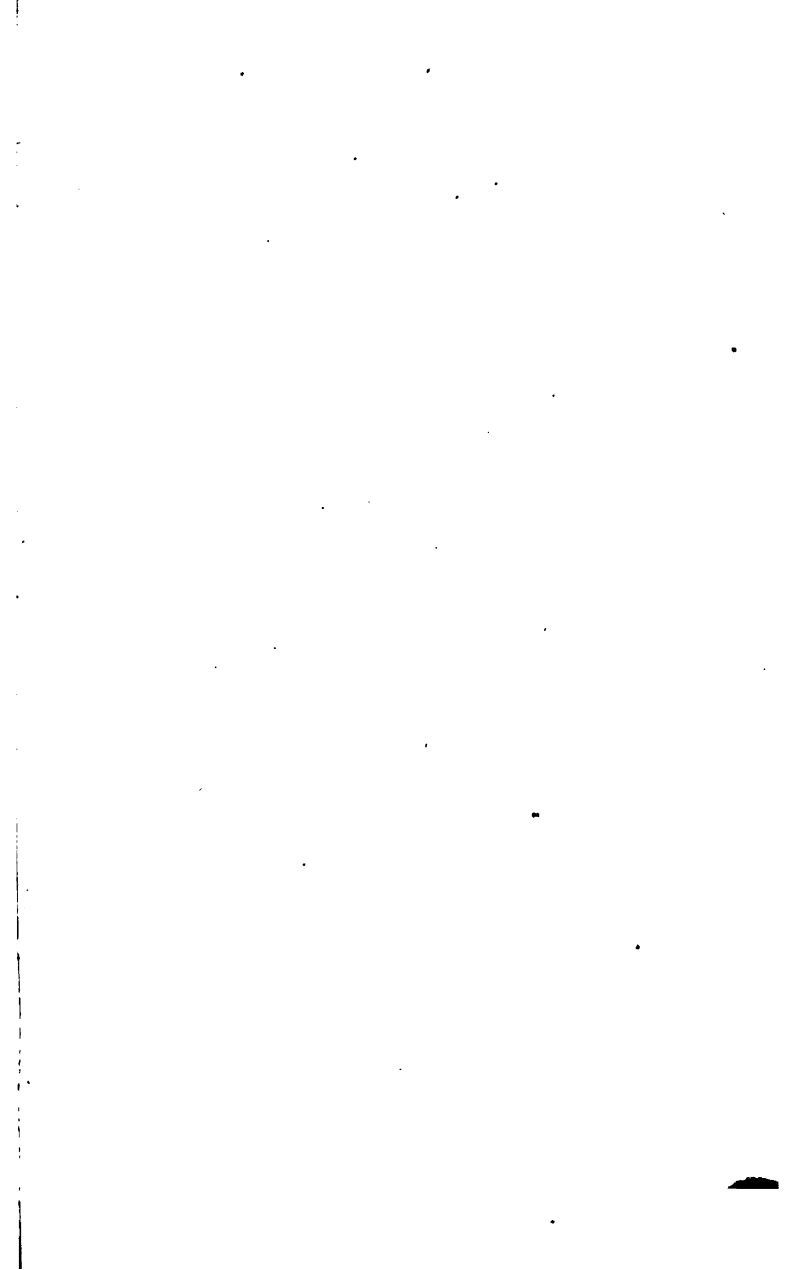
Feb. 1893

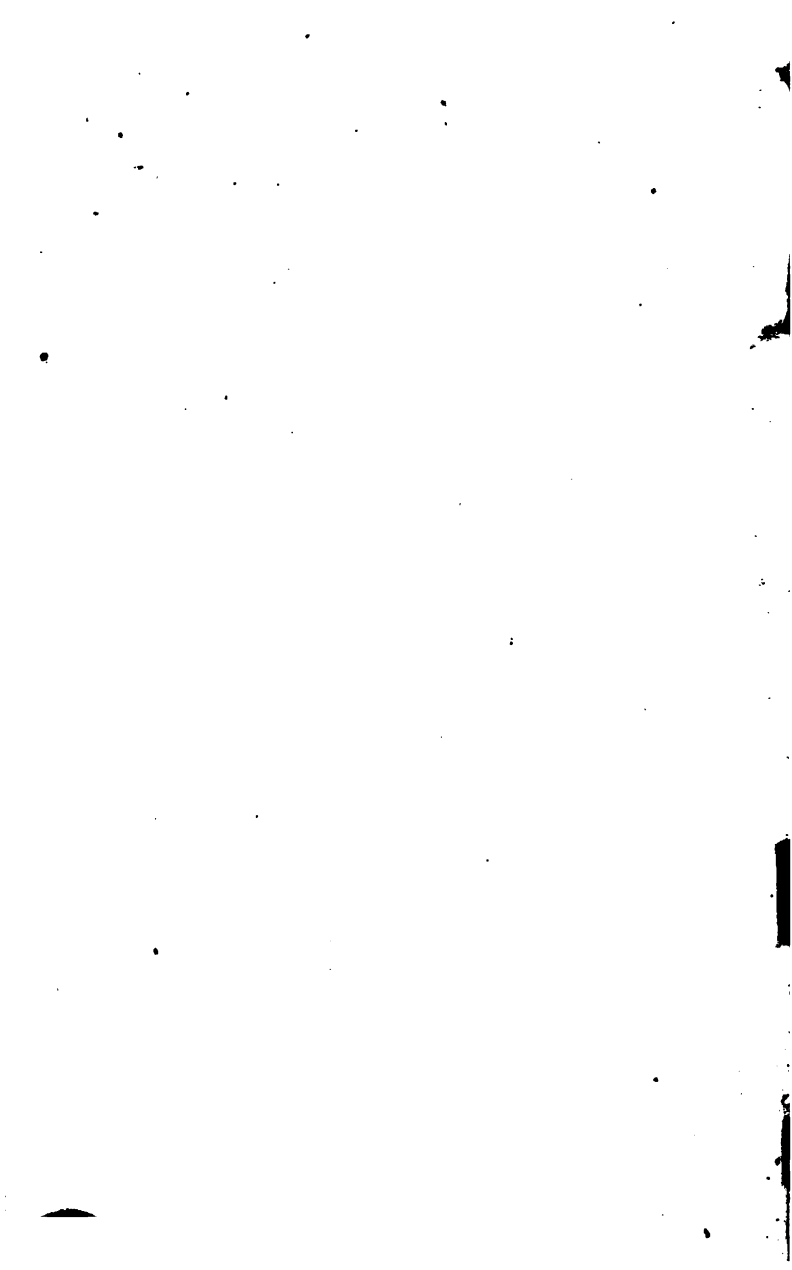
828

W2732

1843







ZENOBIA:

OR

THE FALL OF PALMYRA.



Wart. Williams

ZENO BIA:

OR

THE FALL OF PALMYRA.

A HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

IN LETTERS OF LUCIUS M. PISO FROM PALMYRA,

TO

HIS FRIEND MARCUS CURTIUS AT ROME.

VOLUME II.

NEW YORK:

C. S. FRANCIS & CO. BROADWAY.

BOSTON:

JOSEPH H. FRANCIS, 128 WASHINGTON ST.

.....
1843.

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1838,
by CHARLES S. FRANCIS,
in the Clerk's office of the Southern District of New York.

Gift
Tappan Presb. Ass.
11-10-1831

09-1-3 38mB

ZENOBIA.

LETTER X.

As I returned from the worship of the Christians to the house of Gracchus, my thoughts wandered from the subjects which had just occupied my mind to the condition of the country, and the prospect now growing more and more portentous of an immediate rupture with Rome. On my way I passed through streets of more than Roman magnificence, exhibiting all the signs of wealth, taste, refinement, and luxury. The happy, light-hearted populace were moving through them, enjoying at their leisure the calm beauty of the evening, or hastening to or from some place of festivity. The earnest tone of conversation, the loud laugh, the witty retort, the merry jest, fell upon my ear from one and another as I passed along. From the windows of the palaces of the merchants and nobles, the rays of innu-

merable lights streamed across my path, giving to the streets almost the brilliancy of day; and the sound of music, either of martial instruments, or of the harp accompanied by the voice, at every turn arrested my attention, and made me pause to listen.

A deep melancholy came over me. It seemed to me that the days of this people were numbered, and that the gods intending their ruin had first made them mad. Their gayety appeared to me no other than madness. They were like the gladiators of our circuses, who, doomed to death, pass the last days of life in a delirium of forced and frantic joy. Many of the inhabitants I could not but suppose utterly insensible to the dangers which impend—or ignorant of them; but more I believe are cheerful, and even gay, through a mad contempt of them. They look back upon their long and uninterrupted prosperity—they call to mind their late glorious achievements under Odenatus and their Queen—they think of the wide extent of their empire—they remember that Longinus is their minister, and Zenobia still their Queen—and give their fears to the winds. A contest with Rome they approach as they would the games of the amphitheatre.

The situation of their city, defended as it is by the wide-stretching deserts, is indeed enough of itself to inspire the people with a belief that it is impregnable. It requires an effort, I am aware, to admit the likelihood of an army from the far west first overcoming the dangers of the desert, and then levelling the walls of the city, which seem more like ramparts of Nature's making so massy as they, than any work of man. And the Palmyrenes have certainly also some excuse in the

wretched management of our generals, ever since the expedition of Valerian, and in the brilliancy of their own achievements, for thinking well of themselves, and anticipating, without much apprehension for the issue, a war with us. But these and the like apologies, however they may serve for the common people, surely are of no force in their application to the intelligent, and such as fill the high places of the kingdom. They know that although upon some mere question of honor or of boundary, it might be very proper and politic to fight a single battle rather than tamely submit to an encroachment, it is quite another thing when the only aim of the war is to see which is the stronger of the two—which is to be master. This last, what is it but madness? the madness of pride and ambition in the Queen—in the people the madness of a love and a devotion to her, unparalleled since the world began. A blindness as of death has seized them all.

Thinking of these things, and full of saddest forebodings as to the fate of this most interesting and polished people, I reached the gate of the palace of Gracchus. The inmates, Gracchus and Fausta, I learned from Milo, were at the palace of the Queen, whither I was instructed by them to resort at the request of Zenobia herself. The chariot of my host soon bore me there. It was with pleasure that I greeted this unexpected good fortune. I had not even seen the Queen since the day passed at her villa, and I was not a little desirous, before the ambassadors should receive their final answer, to have one more opportunity of conversing with her.

The moment I entered the apartment where the

Queen was with her guests, I perceived that all state was laid aside, and that we were to enjoy each other with the same social ease as when in the country, or as on that first evening in the gardens of the palace. There was on this occasion no prostration, and no slave crouched at her feet; and all the various Persian ceremonial, in which this proud woman so delights, was dispensed with. The room in which we met was vast, and opening on two of its sides upon those lofty Corinthian porticos, which add so greatly to the magnificence of this palace. Light was so disposed as to shed a soft and moon-like radiance, which, without dazzling, perfectly revealed every person and object, even to the minutest beauties of the paintings upon the walls, and of the statuary that offered to the eye the master-pieces of ancient and modern sculpture. The company was scattered; some being seated together in conversation, others observing the works of art, others pacing the marble floors of the porticos, their forms crossing and recrossing the ample arched door-ways which opened upon them.

‘We feared,’ said the Queen, advancing toward me as I entered, ‘that we were not to be so happy as to see you. My other friends have already passed a precious hour with me. But every sacrifice to the affections, be it ever so slight, is a virtue, and therefore you are still an object of praise, rather than of censure.’

I said in reply that an affair of consequence had detained me, or I should have been earlier at the house of Gracchus, so as to have accompanied Fausta.

Fausta, who had been sitting with the Queen, now

came forward, Julia leaning on her arm, and said, 'And what do you imagine to be the affair of consequence that has deprived us of Piso's company?'

'I cannot tell, indeed,' replied Zenobia.

'Julia at least,' said Fausta, 'will applaud him, when she hears that he has just come from an assembly of Christians. May I ask, Lucius, what new truth you have learned with which to enlighten us? But your countenance tells me I must not jest. There—let me smooth that brow and make my peace. But in seriousness, I hope your Mediterranean friend rewarded you for the hour you have given him, and deprived us of?'

'I wish,' I could not but reply, 'that but one out of every thousand hours of my life had been as well rewarded, and it would not have been so worthless. The Princess may believe me when I say that not even the Bishop of Antioch could have done better justice to the Christian argument. I have heard this evening a Christian of the name of Probus, whose history I related—and which you may remember—at the tables, within a few days after my arrival in Palmyra. He is in opinion a follower of Paul, so I am informed, though not—you Julia will be glad to learn it—in his manner of life. What the differences are which separate the Christians from one another in their belief, I know not. I only know that truth cannot take a more winning shape than that in which it came from the lips of Probus, and it was largely supported by the words of the founder of the religion. I think you may justly congratulate your city and your subjects,' I continued addressing Zenobia, 'upon the labors and teaching of

a man like Probus. The sentiments which he utters are such as must tend to the strength of any government which relies for its support, in any sense, upon the social and personal virtues of the people. In implanting the virtues of justice, temperance, and piety, and in binding each heart to every other, by the bonds of a love which this religion makes itself almost to consist in, it does all that either philosophy or religion can do for the harmony and order of society, the safety of governments, and the peace of the world.'

'You speak with the earnestness of a deep persuasion, Roman,' replied the Queen, 'and I shall not forget the name and office of the person whom you have now named to me. I hear with pleasure of the arrival of any teacher of truth in my kingdom. I have derived so much myself from the influences of letters and philosophy, that it is no far-off conclusion for me to arrive at, that my people must be proportionally benefited by an easy access to the same life-giving fountains. Whatever helps to quicken thought, and create or confirm habits of reflection, is so much direct service to the cause of humanity. I truly believe that there is no obstacle but ignorance, to prevent the world from attaining a felicity and a virtue, such as we now hardly dream of—ignorance respecting the first principles of philosophy and religion. Knowledge is not less essential to the increase and elevation of virtue, than it is to the further advances of truth, and the detection of error. Prove the truth, and mankind will always prefer it to falsehood. So too, demonstrate wherein goodness consists, and the road that leads to it, and mankind will prefer it to vice. Vice is a mistake, as

well as a fault; I do not say as often. I fear that the Christian teachers are occupying themselves and their disciples too much about mere speculative and fanciful distinctions, while they give too little heed to that which alone is of any consequence, virtue. In this, Longinus,' turning towards the philosopher, who had now joined us, 'I think they affect to imitate the commentators and living expositors of the great Plato. I have heard from Paul of Samosata accounts of differences among Christians, where the points were quite too subtle for my understanding to appreciate. They reminded me of the refinements of some of the young adventurers from Athens, who occasionally have resorted here for the purpose of elucidating the doctrines of your great master—pseudo-philosophers and tyros, I perceive you are waiting to term them. Is it so that you denominate Polemo the Athenian, who as I learn is now here with the benevolent design of enlightening my people?'

'He is a man,' replied Longinus, 'hardly worthy to be named in this connection and this presence at all. I have neither met him nor heard him, nor do I desire to do so. It is through the mischievous intermeddling of such as he that the honorable name and office of philosopher are brought into contempt. It requires more intellect than ever enlightens the soul of Polemo, to comprehend the lofty truth of Plato. I trust that when it has been my pleasure to unfold the sense of that great teacher, it has not been found to be either unprofitable, or unintelligible?'

Zenobia smiled and said, 'I must confess that at times, as I have ever frankly stated, my mind has been

a little tasked. There has been but an approach to a perfect idea. But I do not say that a perfect conception has not been presented. So that when this has happened, Longinus being the teacher, and Zenobia and Julia the pupils, I cannot doubt that when the task is entrusted to less cultivated minds—the task both of teaching and learning—it must frequently end in what it might be rash to term light or knowledge.’

‘I grieve, O Queen,’ replied Longinus, smiling in his turn, ‘that both you and the Princess should have possessed so little affinity for the soul-purifying and elevating doctrines of the immortal Plato—that you, Queen, should have even preferred the dark annals of Egyptian and Assyrian history and politics, and the Greek learning; and you, Princess, should have fixed your affections upon this, not new-found philosophy, but new-invented religion, of the Christians. I still anticipate the happiness to lead you both into the groves of the academy, and detain you there, where and where only are seats that well become you.’

‘But is it not,’ I ventured here to suggest, ‘some objection to the philosophy of Plato as the guide of life, that it requires minds of the very highest order to receive it? Philosophy, methinks, should be something of such potency, yet at the same time of such simplicity, that it should not so much require a lofty and elevated intellect to admit it, as tend, being received readily and easily by minds of a humbler order, to raise them up to itself. Now this, so far as I understand it, is the character of the Christian philosophy—for philosophy I must think it deservedly called. It is admitted into the mind with ease. But once being there, its operation is continually to exalt and refine it

—leading it upwards forever to some higher point than it has hitherto arrived at. I do not deny an elevating power to your philosophy when once an inmate of the soul—I only assert the difficulty of receiving it on the part of the common mind.’

‘And the common mind has nothing to do,’ replied the Greek, ‘with Plato or his wisdom. They are for minds of a higher order. Why should the man who makes my sandals and my cloak be at the same time a philosopher? Would he be the happier? In my opinion, it would but increase his discontent. Every stitch that he set would be accompanied by the reflection, “What a poor employment is this for a soul like mine, imbued with the best wisdom of Greece,” and if this did not make him miserable at his task, it would make him contemptible when he should forsake it to do the work of some Polemo—who, it may safely be presumed, has made some such exchange of occupation. No. Philosophy is not for the many, but the few. Parts there are of it which may descend and become a common inheritance. Other parts there are, and it is of these I speak, which may not.’

‘Therein,’ I rejoined, ‘I discern its inferiority to christianity, which appeals to all and is suited to all, to lowest as well as highest, to highest as well as lowest.’

‘But I remember to have been told,’ said the Greek in reply, ‘that Christian teachers too have their mysteries—their doctrines for the common people, and their refinements for the initiated.’

‘I have heard not of it,’ I answered; ‘if it be so I should lament it. It would detract from its value greatly in my judgment.’

'Where your information fails, Piso, mine perhaps may serve,' said Julia, as I paused at fault. 'It is indeed true, as has been hinted by Longinus, that some of the Christian doctors, through their weak and mistaken ambition to assimilate their faith the nearest possible to the Greek philosophy, have magnified the points in which the least resemblance could be traced between them; and through the force of a lively imagination have discovered resemblances which exist only in their fancies. These they make their boast of, as showing that if Platonism be to be esteemed for its most striking peculiarities, the very same, or ones nearly corresponding, exist also in christianity. Thus they hope to recommend their faith to the lovers of philosophy. Many have by these means been drawn over to it, and have not afterward altered any of their modes of life, and scarce any of their opinions; still wearing the philosopher's robe and teaching their former doctrines, slightly modified by a tincture of christianity. However the motive for such accommodation may be justified, it has already resulted and must do so more and more to the corruption and injury of christianity. This religion, or philosophy, whichever it should be called, ought however,' continued the Princess, addressing particularly the Greek, 'certainly to be judged on its own merits, and not by the conduct or opinions of injudicious, weak, or dishonest advocates. You are not willing that Plato should be judged by the criticisms of a Polemo? but insist that the student should go to the pages of the philosopher himself, or else to some living expositor worthy of him. So the Christian may say of christianity. I have been a reader

of the Christian records, and I can say, that such secret and, mysterious doctrines as you allude to, are not to be found there. Moreover, I can refer you, for the same opinion, to Paul of Antioch—I wish he were here—who, however he may depart from the simplicity of the Christian life, maintains the simplicity of its doctrine.'

'You have well shown, my fair pupil,' replied the philosopher, 'that the imputation upon christianity, of a secret and interior doctrine for the initiated alone, is unjust, but therein have you deprived it of the very feature that would commend it to the studious and inquisitive. It may present itself as a useful moral guide to the common mind, but scarcely can it hope to obtain that enthusiastic homage of souls imbued with the love of letters, and of a refined speculation, which binds in such true-hearted devotion every follower of Plato to the doctrine of his divine master.'

At this moment Zabdas and Otho entered the apartment, and drawing near to our group to salute the Queen, our conversation was broken off. I took occasion, while this ceremony was going through, to turn aside and survey the various beauty and magnificence of the room; with its rare works of art. In this I was joined by Longinus, who, with a taste and a power which I have seen in no other, descanted upon the more remarkable of the pictures and statues, not in the manner of a lecturer, but with a fine perception and observance of that nice line which separates the learned philosopher from the polite man of the world. He was both at once. He never veiled his learning or his genius, and yet never, by the display of either, jarred

the sensibilities of the most refined and cultivated taste.

When we had in this way passed through the apartment, and were standing looking toward where Zenobia sat engaged in earnest conversation with Gracchus and Zabdas, Longinus said,

‘Do you observe the restlessness of the Queen, and that flush upon her cheek? She is thinking of to-morrow and of the departure of the ambassadors. And so too is it with every other here. We speak of other things, but the mind dwells but upon one. I trust the Queen will not lose this fair occasion to gather once more the opinions of those who most love and honor her. Piso, you have seen something of the attachment of this people to their Queen. But you know not the one half of the truth. There is not a living man in Palmyra, save only Antiochus, who would not lay down his life for Zenobia. I except not myself. This attachment is founded in part upon great and admirable qualities. But it is to be fully explained only when I name the fascinations of a manner and a beauty such as poets have feigned in former ages, but which never have been realized till now. I acknowledge it,—we are slaves yoked to her car, and ask no higher felicity or glory.’

‘I wonder not,’ said I; ‘though a Roman, I have hardly myself escaped the common fate; you need not be surprised to see me drawn, by-and-by, within the charmed circle, and binding upon my own neck the silken chains and the golden yoke. But see, the Queen asks our audience.’

We accordingly moved toward the seat which

Zenobia now occupied, surrounded by her friends, some being seated and others standing without order around her.

‘Good friends,’ she said, ‘I believe one thought fills every mind present here. Is it not better that we give it utterance? I need the sympathy and the counsel of those who love me. But I ask not only for the opinions of those who agree with me, but as sincerely for those of such as may differ from me. You know me well in this, that I refuse not to hearken to reasons, the strongest that can be devised, although they oppose my own settled judgment. Upon an occasion like this it would ill become the head of a great empire to shut out the slenderest ray of light that from any quarter might be directed upon the questions which so deeply interest and agitate us. I believe that the great heart of my people goes with me in the resolution I have taken, and am supported in by my council; but I am well aware, that minds not inferior to any in strength, and hearts that beat not less warmly toward their country and toward me than any others, are opposed to that resolution, and anticipate nought but disaster and ruin from a conflict with the masters of the world. Let us freely open our minds each to other, and let no one fear to offend me, but by withholding his full and free opinion.’

‘We who know our Queen so well,’ said Gracchus, ‘hardly need these assurances. Were I as bitterly opposed to the measures proposed as I am decidedly in favor of them, I should none the less fearlessly and frankly declare the reasons of my dissent. I am sure

that every one here experiences the freedom you enjoy. But who will need to use it? For are we not of one mind? I see indeed one or two who oppose the general sentiment. But for the rest, one spirit animates all, and what is more, to the farthest limits of the kingdom am I persuaded the same spirit spreads, and possesses and fills every soul. The attempt of Aurelian to control us in our affairs, to dictate to us concerning the limits of our empire so far removed, is felt to be a wanton freak of despotic power, which, if it be not withstood in its first encroachment, may proceed to other acts less tolerable still, and which may leave us scarcely our name as a distinct people—and that covered with shame. Although a Roman by descent, I advocate not Roman intolerance. I can see and denounce injustice in Aurelian as well as in another. Palmyra is my country and Zenobia my Queen, and when I seek not their honor, may my own fall blasted and ruined. I stand ready to pledge for them in this emergency, what every other man of Palmyra holds it his privilege to offer, my property and my life, and if I have any possession dearer than these, I am ready to bring and lay it upon the same altar.'

The eyes of Zenobia filled at the generous enthusiasm of her faithful counsellor—and, for Fausta, it was only a look and sign of the Queen that held her to her seat.

Longinus then, as seemed to be his place, entered at length into the merits of the question. He did not hesitate to say that at the first outbreak of these difficulties he had been in favor of such concessions to the

pride of Rome as would perhaps have appeased her and cast no indignity upon Palmyra. He did not scruple to add that he had deeply disapproved and honestly censured that rash act of the young princes in assuming the garb and state of Cæsars. He would rather leave to Rome her own titles and empire, and stand here upon a new and independent footing. It was a mad and useless affront, deeply wounding to the pride of Aurelian, and the more rankling as it was of the nature of a personal as well as national affront. He withheld not blame too from that towering ambition which, as he said, coveted the world because the gods had indeed imparted a genius capable to rule the world. He had exerted all his powers to moderate and restrain it, by infusing a love of other than warlike pursuits. 'But,' said he, 'the gods weave the texture of our souls, not ourselves; and the web is too intensely wove and drenched in too deep a dye for us to undo or greatly change. The eagle cannot be tamed down to the softness of a dove, and no art of the husbandman can send into the gnarled and knotted oak the juices that shall smooth and melt its stiffness into the yielding pliancy of the willow. I wage no war with the work of the gods. Besides, the demands of Rome have now grown to such a size that they swallow up our very existence as a free and sovereign state. They leave us but this single city and province out of an empire that now stretches from the Nile to the Bosphorus—an empire obtained by what cost of blood and treasure I need not say, any more than by what consummate skill in that art which boasts the loftiest minds of all ages.' He went on to say, that Palmyra owed a duty not only to

herself in this matter, but to the whole East, and even to the world. For what part of the civilized world had not been trampled into dust by the despotism of almighty Rome? It was needful to the well-being of nations that some power should boldly stand forth and check an insolence that suffered no city nor kingdom to rest in peace. No single people ought to obtain universal empire. A powerful nation was the more observant of the eternal principles of honor and justice for being watched by another, its equal. Individual character needs such supervision, and national as much. Palmyra was now an imposing object in the eye of the whole world. It was the second power. All he wished was, that for the sake of the world's peace, it should retain this position. He deprecated conquest. However another might aspire to victory over Aurelian, to new additions from the Roman territory, he had no such aspirations. On the other hand, he should deplore any success beyond the maintenance of a just and honorable independence. This was our right, he said, by inheritance, and as much also by conquest, and for this he was ready, with the noble Gracchus, to offer to his sovereign his properties, his powers, and his life. 'If my poor life,' he closed with saying, 'could prolong by a single year the reign of one who, with virtues so eminent and a genius so vast, fills the throne of this fair kingdom, I would lay it at her feet with joy, and think it a service well done for our own and the world's happiness.'

No sooner had Longinus ended, than Otho, a man of whom I have more than once spoken to you, begged to say a few words.

‘My opinions are well known,’ he began with saying, ‘and it may be needless that I should again, and especially here, declare them, seeing that they will jar so rudely with those entertained by you, my friends around me. But sure I am, that no one has advocated the cause and the sentiments which Zenobia cherishes so fondly, with a truer, deeper affection for her, with a sincerer love of her glory, than I rise to oppose them with—’ ‘We know it, we know it, Otho,’ interrupted the Queen. ‘Thanks, noble Queen, for the fresh assurance of it. It is because I love, that I resist you. It is because I glory in your reign, in your renown, in your virtues, that I oppose an enterprise that I see with a prophet’s vision will tarnish them all. Were I your enemy, I could not do better than to repeat the arguments that have just fallen from the lips of the head of our councils, set off with every trick of eloquence that would send them with a yet more resistless power into the minds not only of those who are assembled here, but of those, your subjects, wherever over these large dominions they are scattered. To press this war is to undermine the foundations of the fairest kingdom the sun shines upon, and unseat the most beloved ruler that ever swayed a sceptre over the hearts of a devoted people. It can have no other issue. And this is not, O noble Queen, to throw discredit upon former achievements, or to express a doubt of powers which have received the homage of the world. It is only with open eyes to acknowledge what all but the blind must see and confess, the overwhelming superiority in power of every kind of the other party. With a feeble man upon the Roman throne, and I grant that upon the

outskirts of her empire a brave and determined opposition might obtain great advantages, and conquer or re-conquer provinces and cities, and bring disgrace upon Roman generals. But this must be a transitory glory—the mere shooting of an evening star—ending in deeper gloom. For what is Rome? Is it the commander of a legion, or the resident governor of a dependent kingdom, or even Cæsar himself? And have you dealt with Rome when you have dealt with Balista, or Heraclianus, or Probus? Alas! no. Rome still stands omnipotent and secure. The lion has been but chafed, and is still a lion, with more than his former fury; one hair has been drawn; his teeth, his limbs, his massy weight, his untouched energies, remain. Rome has been asleep for thirteen long years. Any empire but Rome—which is immortal—would have slept the sleep of death under the dastardly, besotted Gallienus. But Rome has but slumbered, and has now awaked with renovated powers, under the auspices of a man whose name alone has carried terror and dismay to the farthest tribes of the German forests. Against Aurelian, with all the world at his back! and what can any resistance of ours avail? We may gain a single victory—to that, genius and courage are equal, and we possess them in more than even Roman measure—but that very victory may be our undoing, or it will but embitter the temper of the enemy, call forth a new display of unexhausted and inexhaustible resources, while our very good success itself will have nearly annihilated our armies; and what can happen then but ruin, absolute and complete? Roman magnanimity may spare our city and our name. But it is more

likely that Roman vengeance may blot them both out from the map of the world, and leave us nought but the fame of our Queen, and the crumbling ruins of this once flourishing city, by which to be remembered by posterity.

‘These are not the counsels of fear—of a tame and cowardly spirit. I may rebut that imputation without vanity, by referring to the siege of Ctesiphon and the reduction of Egypt. The generous Zabdas will do me justice—nay, you all will—why am I apprehensive? Bear with me a moment more’—‘Say on, say on, noble Otho,’ said the Queen, and many other voices at the same time.—‘The great Longinus has said,’ continued he, ‘that it is needful that there be one empire at least in the world to stand between Rome and universal dominion. I believe it. And that Palmyra may be, or continue to be, that kingdom, I counsel peace—I counsel delay—temporary concession—negotiation—any thing but war. A Roman emperor lives not forever; and let us once ward off the jealousy of Aurelian, by yielding to some of his demands, and resigning pretensions which are nothing in reality, but exist as names and shadows only, and long years of peace and prosperity may again arise, when our now infant kingdom may shoot up into the strong bone and muscle of a more vigorous manhood, and with reason assert rights, which now it seems but madness, essential madness, to do. Listen, great Queen! to the counsels of a time-worn soldier, whose whole soul is bound up in most true-hearted devotion to your greatness and glory. I quarrel not with your ambition, or your love of warlike fame. I would only direct them to fields

where they may pluck fresh laurels, and divert them from those where waits—pardon me, my royal mistress!—inevitable shame.’

- Soon as Otho had given a single sign of pause, Zabdas, like a war-horse, sprang upon his feet. ‘Were not the words,’ said he, ‘which we have just heard, the words of Otho, I would cry out treason! treason!—But Otho—is Otho. What nation would ever, O Queen, outgrow its infancy, were a policy like this, now descanted upon, to guide its counsels? The general who risks nothing can win nothing. And the nation that should wait till absolutely sure of victory before unsheathing the sword would never draw it, or only in some poor skirmish, where victory would be as disgraceful as defeat. Besides, although such a nation were to rise by such victories, if victories those may be called won by a thousand over an hundred, who would not blush to own himself a citizen of it? Greatness lies not in pounds weight of flesh, but in skill, courage, warlike genius, energy, and an indomitable will. A great heart will scatter a multitude. The love of freedom, in a few brave spirits, overthrows kingdoms. It was not, if I rightly remember, numbers by which the Persian hosts were beaten upon the plains of Greece. It was there something like three hundred to a million—the million weighed more than the three hundred, yet the three hundred were the heavier. The arm of one Spartan fell like a tempest upon the degenerate Persians, crushing its thousands at a single sweep. It was a great heart and a trusting spirit that made it weigh so against mere human flesh. Are we to wait till Palmyra be as multitudinous as Rome, ere we risk

a battle? Perhaps Rome will grow as fast as Palmyra—and how long must we then wait? I care not, though Aurelian bring half Europe at his back, there sits a throned spirit—whether of earth or not, I cannot tell, but as I think more than half divine—who will drive him back shattered and bleeding, the jest and ridicule of the observing world. She who, by the force of pure intellect, has out of this speck in the desert made a large empire, who has humbled Persia, and entered her capital in triumph, has defeated three Roman armies, and wrested more provinces than time will allow me to number, from the firm grasp of the self-styled mistress of the world, this more than Semiramis is to be daunted forsooth, because a Roman soldier of fortune sends his hirelings here and asks of her the surrender of three fourths of her kingdom—she is to kneel and cry him mercy—and humbly lay at his royal feet the laurels won by so much precious blood and treasure. May the sands of the desert bury Palmyra and her Queen, sooner than one humiliating word shall pass those lips, or one act of concession blast a fame to this hour spotless as the snows of Ararat, and bright as the Persian God. Shame upon the man who, after the lessons of the past, wants faith in his sovereign. Great Queen, believe me, the nation is with you. Palmyra, as one man, will pour out treasure to the last and least dust of gold, and blood to the last drop, that you may still sit secure upon that throne, and stretch your sceptre over a yet wider and undishonored empire.'

'Let not the Queen,' resumed Otho, as Zabdas ceased, 'let not the Queen doubt my faith'—

'I doubt it not, good Otho,' she replied; 'heed not the sharp words of the impetuous Zabdas; in his zeal for the art he only loves and for his Queen, he has thrust his lance hither and thither at all adventures, but as in the sports of the field he means no injury.'

'Zabdas intends no wrong, I am well assured,' rejoined Otho. 'I would only add a word, to show upon what I ground my doubt of good success, should Aurelian muster all his strength. It cannot be thought that I have lost my faith in the military genius and prowess of either Zenobia or Zabdas, with both of whom, side by side, I have fought so many times, and by their conduct mounted up to victory. Neither do I doubt the courage of our native Palmyrenes, nor their devotion to the interests of their country. They will war to the death. But should a second army be to be raised, should the chosen troops of the city and its neighboring territories be once cut off, upon whom are we then to rely? Where are the auxiliaries whom we can trust? What reliance can be placed upon Arabs, the Armenians, the Saracens, the Cappadocians, the Syrians? Is our empire so old, and so well moulded into one mass, so single in interest and affection, that these scattered tribes—formerly hostile to each other and to us, many, most of them at different times subject to Rome—may be depended upon as our own people? Have we legions already drawn from their numbers, disciplined, and accustomed to our modes of warfare? Truly, this war with Rome seems to be approached much as if it were but some passing show of arms, some holiday pastime. But the gods grant that none of my forebedings turn true!'

The words of the sober-minded and honest Otho found no echo in the bosoms of those who heard him, and he ceased, when I believe he would willingly have gone on to a closer and sharper opposition. Others followed him, each one present eagerly pressing forward to utter, were it but one word, to show his loyalty, and his zeal in the service of his Queen.

When all, or nearly all, had in this manner manifested their attachment and declared their opinions, the Queen turned to me, saying, that as I had there heard so much of what I could not approve, and perhaps had power to disprove, it was right that if I wished I should also express my opinions; nay, it would be esteemed as a favor by herself, and she was sure also by all her friends, if I would freely impart any knowledge I might possess, by which any error might be corrected, or false impressions dissipated.

Being thus invited, I not unwillingly entered into the questions that had been agitated, and with earnestness and sincerity, and with all the power I could bring to bear, labored to expose the imminent hazard to the very existence of the kingdom, which was run by this rash encounter with the countless hosts of Rome. I revealed a true picture of the resources of our country, and sketched, as I could so well do in their proper colors, the character of the fierce Aurelian; and, in a word, did all that a Roman could do for Rome, and a Palmyrene for Palmyra. I remembered what Otho had told me of the courtesy and willingness with which any company of genuine Palmyrenes would listen to me, and shrank not from any statement however harsh and grating to their national vanity, but which seemed

to me to convey wholesome truth. It appeared to me indeed too late to work any change in minds so pledged already to an adopted opinion, but I resolved to leave nothing untried to turn them from a bent that must end in irretrievable ruin. I was encouraged too, and urged on to more than a common effort, by the imploring countenance of the Princess Julia, who, in that expressive manner, begged me to use all frankness and boldness in my communications. Otho had, it is true, with great power and unshrinking fidelity, advocated the cause of peace, and laid bare the true motives to the war, but still it appeared to me that much might be said by a Roman and a stranger, that would carry with it more weight than as coming from a citizen, however loved and respected. To you, my friend, I need enter into no detail; you will easily imagine what it was, as a Roman, I should urge upon such an occasion, and in such a presence. I shall always remember with satisfaction, I am sure, whatever the issue of this difference may be, my efforts to preserve peace between two nations, whose best interests must be advanced not by enmity and war, but by the closest alliance of friendly intercourse.

I was heard with attention and respect, and afterwards with sincerity thanked, not only by the opposers of the present measures, but by their advocates also; they were glad to know the worst that could be said against the cause they had espoused. A brief silence ensued as I ended, and the eyes of all were instinctively turned upon Zenobia, the ruling spirit—the maker of the kingdom—its soul—its life-blood—its head—and bright, peerless crown.

‘It was my wish,’ said Zenobia, answering the general expectation, ‘before the final decision of the senate and the council, to receive from my friends, in social confidence, a full expression of their feelings, their opinions, their hopes, and their fears, concerning the present posture of our affairs. My wish has been gratified, and I truly thank you all, and not least those my friends—as a philosopher, should I not term them my best friends?—who, with a generous trust in me and in you who are on my part, have not shrunk from the duty, always a hard one, of exposing the errors and the faults of those they love. After such exposure—and which at more length and with more specification will, I trust, be repeated in the hearing of the senate and the council—it cannot be said that I blindly rushed upon danger and ruin, if these await us, or weakly blundered upon a wider renown, if that, as I doubt not, is to be the event of the impending contest. I would neither gain nor lose, but as the effect of a wise calculation and a careful choice of means. Withhold not now your confidence, which before you have never refused me. Believe that now, as ever before, I discern with a clear eye the path which is to conduct us to a yet higher pitch of glory. I have long anticipated the emergency that has arisen. I was not so ignorant of the history and character of the Roman people, as to suppose that they would suffer an empire like this, founded and governed by a woman, to divide long with them the homage of the world. With the death of the ignoble son of Valerian, I believed would close our undisputed reign over most of these eastern provinces. Had Claudius lived, good as he was, he was too Roman

in his mould not to have done what Aurelian now attempts. I prepared then for the crisis which has come not till now. I am ready now. My armies are in complete discipline ; the city itself so fortified with every art and muniment of war as safely to defy any power that any nation may array before its walls. But were this not so ; did the embassy of Aurelian take us by surprise and unprepared ; should a people that respects itself, and would win or keep the good opinion of mankind, tamely submit to requisitions like these ? Are we to dismember our country at the behest of a stranger, of a foreigner, and a Roman ? Do you feel that without a struggle first for freedom and independence, you could sink down into a mean tributary of all-ingulfing Rome, and lose the name of Palmyrene ? I see by the most expressive of all language, that you would rather die. Happy are you, my friends, that this is not your case ; you are ready for the enemy ; you shall not lose your name or your renown ; and you shall not die. I and my brave soldiers will at a distance breast the coming storm ; your ears shall not so much as hear its thunder ; and at the worst, by the sacrifice of our lives, your and your country's life shall be preserved.

‘I am advised to avert this evil by negotiation, by delay. Does any one believe that delay on our part will change the time-engendered character of Rome ? If I cease to oppose, will Rome cease to be ambitious ? Will fair words turn aside the fierce spirit of Aurelian from his settled purpose ? Will he—so truly painted by the Roman Piso—who looks to build an undying name, by bringing back the empire to the bounds that

compassed it under the great Antonines, let slip the glory for a few cities now in hand, and others promised? or for the purple robe humbly pulled from our young Cæsars' shoulders? Believe it not. The storm that threatens might be so warded off perhaps for a day—a month—a year—a reign—but after that it would come, and, in all reasonable calculation, with tenfold fury. I would rather meet the danger at its first menace, and thereby keep both our good name,—which otherwise should we not sully or lose?—and find it less too than a few years more would make it.

‘I am charged with pride and ambition. The charge is true, and I glory in its truth. Who ever achieved any thing great in letters, arts, or arms, who was not ambitious? Cæsar was not more ambitious than Cicero. It was but in another way. All greatness is born of ambition. Let the ambition be a noble one, and who shall blame it? I confess I did once aspire to be Queen not only of Palmyra, but of the East. That I am. I now aspire to remain so. Is it not an honorable ambition? Does it not become a descendant of the Ptolemys and of Cleopatra? I am applauded by you all for what I have already done. You would not it should have been less. But why pause here? Is so much ambition praiseworthy, and more criminal? Is it fixed in nature that the limits of this empire should be Egypt on the one hand, the Hellespont and the Euxine on the other? Were not Suez and Armenia more natural limits? Or hath empire no natural limit, but is broad as the genius that can devise, and the power that can win? Rome has the West. Let Palmyra possess the East. Not that nature prescribes

this and no more. The gods prospering, and I swear not that the Mediterranean shall hem me in upon the West, or Persia on the East. Longinus is right—I would that the world were mine. I feel within the will and the power to bless it, were it so.

‘Are not my people happy? I look upon the past and the present, upon my nearer and remoter subjects, and ask nor fear the answer—whom have I wronged? what province have I oppressed? what city pillaged? what region drained with taxes? whose life have I unjustly taken, or estates coveted or robbed? whose honor have I wantonly assailed? whose rights, though of the weakest and poorest, have I trenched upon? I dwell where I would ever dwell, in the hearts of my people. It is writ in your faces, that I reign not more over you than within you. The foundation of my throne is not more power than love. Suppose now, my ambition add another province to our realm? Is it an evil? The kingdoms already bound to us by the joint acts of ourself and the late royal Odenatus, we found discordant and at war. They are now united and at peace. One harmonious whole has grown out of hostile and sundered parts. At my hands they receive a common justice and equal benefits. The channels of their commerce have I opened, and dug them deep and sure. Prosperity and plenty are in all their borders. The streets of our capital bear testimony to the distant and various industry which here seeks its market. This is no vain boasting—receive it not so, good friends: it is but truth. He, who traduces himself, sins with him who traduces another. He who is unjust to himself, or less than just, breaks a law as

well as he who hurts his neighbor. I tell you what I am and what I have done, that your trust for the future may not rest upon ignorant grounds. If I am more than just to myself, rebuke me. If I have overstepped the modesty that became me, I am open to your censure, and will bear it. But I have spoken, that you may know your Queen—not only by her acts, but by her admitted principles. I tell you then that I am ambitious—that I crave dominion, and while I live will reign. Sprung from a line of kings, a throne is my natural seat. I love it. But I strive too—you can bear me witness that I do—that it shall be, while I sit upon it, an honored, unpolluted seat. If I can, I will hang a yet brighter glory round it.

‘And as to pride—what if my woman’s nature, that nature the gods implanted and I have received from royal ancestors, loves the pomp and show of power? What if the pride which dwells in all high natures gratifies itself in me by planting its feet upon an Indian princess, as its only fitting footstool, who’—Suddenly at this point of her discourse the Queen broke off, and advancing from where she stood—she had risen from her seat in the ardor of her address—greeted with native courtesy and grace the Roman ambassadors, who, in company with others of their train, we now saw to enter the apartments.

The company, upon this, again resolved itself into many separate groups, and returned to such private topics as each one liked, Zenobia devoting herself to Varro and Petronius.

By and by, at the striking up of music, we moved to another apartment, the banqueting hall—the same

Egyptian room in which I had before partaken the hospitalities of the Eastern Queen, where tables, set out with the most lavish magnificence, and bending beneath the most tempting burdens, awaited our approach. A flood of light was poured from the ceiling, and reflected back again from the jewelled wine cups and embossed gold of Demetrius.

But I cannot pretend to describe this sumptuous feast. I will only say, that the Queen, seated between the Roman ambassadors, gave the evening to them. And what with the frequent cups in which she pledged them, and the fascinating charms of her beauty and her conversation, I fear there was but little of the Roman in them when they rose to depart. In this more peaceful way has Zenobia won provinces and cities, as well as at the head of her armies. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

FROM my late letters to Fortia, and which without doubt you have before this read, you have learned with certainty, what I am sure the eye of Lucilia must before have clearly discerned, my love of the Princess Julia. I have there related all that it can import my friends to know. The greatest event of my life—the issues of which, whether they are to crown me with a felicity the gods might envy, or plunge me in afflictions divine compassions could not assuage—I have there described with that careful concern for your fullest information, touching all that befalls me, by which you will bear me testimony I have been actuated during my residence in this Eastern capital.

You will not be surprised to learn that my passion is opposed by the Queen. It was in the same apartment of the palace where I first saw this wonderful woman, that at a late interview with her, at her command, I was enjoined to think no more of an alliance with her house.

I was, as you may easily imagine, not a little disturbed in anticipation of an interview with such a person, on such an occasion. Fausta assured me that I might rely upon the Queen's generosity, and could look to receive only the most courteous reception, whatever her decision might be on my suit. 'I fear greatly for your success,' said she, 'but pray the gods both for your and the Princess' sake my fears may not come true. Julia lives in her affections—she cannot like

me become part of the world abroad, and doubly live in its various action. She loves Zenobia indeed with the truest affection, but she has given her heart to you, Lucius, and disappointment here would feed upon her very life. She ought not to be denied. She cannot bear it. Yet Zenobia, devoured by ambition, and holding so little sympathy with human hearts in their mutual loves—all the world to them—may deny her, nor ever half conceive the misery she will inflict upon a being she loves and even reveres. Press your cause, Lucius, with a manly boldness. The gods succeed you.'

The Queen received me graciously, but with a fixed and almost severe countenance. She expressed herself obliged to me for the early knowledge of what otherwise she had not so much as suspected. 'Living myself,' said she 'far above any dependence upon love for my happiness, I am not prone to see the affection in others. The love which fastens upon objects because they are worthy, I can understand and honor. But that mad and blind passion, which loves only because it will love, which can render no reason for its existence but a hot and capricious fancy, I have had no experience of in my own heart, and where I see it I have no feeling for it but one of disapprobation or contempt. If it be but the beauty of Julia which has bewitched thy fancy, Roman, amuse thyself with a brief tour of pleasure, either to Antioch or Alexandria, and other objects will greet thee, and soon drive her from thy thoughts.'

I assured her that my regard was not of this kind; that indeed her transcendent beauty had first won me,

but that other qualities retained me ; that the bond which held me was as much friendship as love, and I might say as much reverence as friendship.

‘ The greater the pity, Roman,’ rejoined the Queen in a voice somewhat stern, but yet melancholy, ‘ the greater the pity. In truth, I had hoped thine was but the love of the painted image, and might without pain be transferred to another, painted but as well. Yet, had I reflected upon the sentiments I have heard from thee, I might have judged thee nobler. But, Piso, this must not be. Were I to look only to myself and Julia, I might well be pleased with a tie that bound us to one whom I have so weighty reasons to respect and honor. But to do this I have no right. I am not my own, but the State’s. Julia is no daughter of mine, but the property of Palmyra. Marriage is one of the chief bonds of nations, as of families. Were it not a crime in me, with selfish regard to my own or my daughter’s pleasure, to bestow her upon a private citizen of whatever worth, when, espousing her to some foreign prince, a province or a kingdom may be won or saved ? ’

‘ But,’ I ventured to remark, ‘ are the hearts of princes and princesses to be bartered away for power or territory ? are the affections to be bought and sold ? Is the question of happiness to be no question in their case ? ’

‘ By no means the principal one. It is not necessarily a sacrifice, but if necessary the sacrifice must be made. The world envies the lot of those who sit upon thrones. But the seat is not without its thorns. It seems all summer with them. But upon whom burst more storms, or charged with redder fury ? They seem to

the unreflecting mind to be the only independent—while they are the slaves of all. The prosperous citizen may link himself and his children when and with whom he likes, and none may gainsay him. He has but to look to himself and his merest whim. The royal family must go and ask his leave. My children are more his than mine. And if it be his pleasure and preference that my daughters ally themselves to an Indian or a Roman prince, his will is done, not mine—his is the gain, mine the loss. And were it just that, when by joining hands though not hearts two nations could be knit together in amity, the royal house should refuse the sacrifice? Roman, I live for Palmyra. I have asked of the gods my children, not for my own pleasure, but for Palmyra's sake. I should give the lie to my whole life, to every sentiment I have harbored since that day I gave myself to the royal Odenatus, were I now to bestow upon a private citizen her, through whom we have so long looked to ally ourselves by a new and stronger bond to some neighboring kingdom. Julia, Roman—you have seen her, you know her, you can appreciate her more than human qualities—Julia is the destined bride of Hormisdas. By her, on Sapor's death, do we hope to bind together by chains never to be afterward sundered, Persia and Palmyra, who, then leagued by interest and affection, may as one kingdom stand up with the more hope against the overwhelming force of Rome. Were I justified to forego this advantage for any private reason? Can you doubt, were I not constrained to act otherwise, whether I should prefer some nobleman of Palmyra, or thee, that so I might ever dwell within the charmed

influence of one, from whom to part will be like the pang of death?’

‘But the princess,’—I again urged.

‘That is scarcely a question,’ she rejoined. ‘She may be a sacrifice; but it will be upon her country’s altar. How many of our brave soldiers, how many of our great officers, with devoted patriotism throw away their lives for their country. You will not say that this is done for the paltry recompense, which at best scarce shields the body from the icy winds of winter, or the scorching rays of summer. And shall not a daughter of the royal house stand ready to encounter the hardships of a throne, the dangers of a Persian court, and the terrors of a royal husband, especially when by doing so, fierce and bloody wars may be staid, and nations brought into closer unity? I know but little of Hormisdas; report speaks well of him. But were it much less that I know, and were report yet less favorable, it were not enough to turn me from my purpose. Palmyra married to Persia, through Julia married to Hormisdas, is that upon which I and my people dwell.’

‘Better a thousand times,’ I then said, ‘to be born to the lot of the humblest peasant—a slave’s is no worse.’

‘Upon love’s calendar,’ said the Queen, ‘so it is. But have I not freely admitted, Roman, the dependency, nay slavery, of a royal house? It would grieve my mother’s heart, I need scarce assure thee, were Julia unhappy. But grief to me might bring joy to two kingdoms.’

I then could not but urge the claims of my own

family, and that by a more powerful and honored one she could not ally herself to Rome; and might not national interest be as well promoted by such a bond, as by one with the remoter East? I was the friend too of Aurelian, much in his confidence and regard.

Zenobia paused, and was for a few moments buried in thought. A faint smile for the first time played over her features as she said in reply, 'I wish for your sake and Julia's it could be so. But it is too late. Rome is resolved upon the ruin of Palmyra—she cannot be turned aside. Aurelian for worlds would not lose the glory of subduing the East. The greater need of haste in seeking a union with Persia. Were Sapor dead to-day, to-morrow an embassy should start for Ecbatana. But think not, Piso, I harbor ill will toward you, or hold your offer in contempt. A Queen of the East might not disdain to join herself to a family, whose ancestors were like yours. That Piso who was once the rival, and in power—not indeed in virtue—the equal of the great Germanicus, and looked, not without show of reason, to the seat of Tiberius; and he who so many years and with such honor reigned over the city its unequalled governor; and thou the descendant and companion of princes—an alliance with such might well be an object of ambition with even crowned heads. And it may well be, seeing the steps by which many an emperor of Rome has climbed upon his precarious seat, that the coming years may behold thee in the place which Aurelian fills, and, were I to pleasure thee in thy request, Julia empress of the world! The vision dazzles! But it cannot be

It would be sad recreancy to my most sacred duty were I, falling in love with a dream, to forsake a great reality.'

'I may not then—' I began.

'No, Piso, you may not even hope. I have reasoned with you because I honor you. But think not that I hesitate or waver. Julia can never be yours. She is the daughter of the state, and to a state must be espoused. Seek not therefore any more to deepen the place which you hold in her affections. Canst thou not be a friend, and leave the lover out? Friendship is a sentiment worthy godlike natures, and is the true sweetener of the cup of life. Love is at best but a bitter sweet; and when sweetest, it is the friendship mingled with it that makes it so. Love, too, wastes away with years. Friendship is eternal. It rests upon qualities that are a part of the soul. The witchery of the outward image helps not to make it, nor being lost as it is with age, can dissolve it. Friendship agrees too with ambition, while love is its most dreaded rival. Need I point to Antony? If, Piso, thou wouldst live the worthy heir of thy great name; if thou wouldst build for thyself a throne in the esteem of mankind, admit friendship, but bar out love. And I trust to hear that thou art great in Rome, greater even than thine ancestor Galba's adopted son. Aim at even the highest, and the arrow, if it reach it not, will hit the nearer. When thou art Cæsar, send me an embassy. Then perhaps—'

She closed with that radiant smile that subdues all to her will, her manner at the same time giving me

to understand that the conversation was ended, her own sentence being left playfully unfinished.

I urged not many things which you may well suppose it came into my mind to do, for I neither wished, nor did I feel as if I had a right, at an hour of so much public inquietude, to say aught to add to the burden already weighing upon her. Besides, it occurred to me, that when within so short a time great public changes may take place, and the relations of parties be so essentially altered, it was not worth while to give utterance to sentiments, which the lapse of a brief period might show to have been unnecessary and unwise. I may also add that the presence of this great woman is so imposing; she seems, in the very nature and form the gods have given her, to move so far above the rest of her kind, that I found it impossible both to say much of what I had intended to say, and to express what I did say with the ease and propriety which are common to me on ordinary or other extraordinary occasions. They are few, I believe, who possess themselves fully in her presence. Even Longinus confesses a constraint.

'It is even as I apprehended,' said Fausta, as I communicated to her the result of my interview with the Queen. 'I know her heart to have been set upon a foreign alliance by marriage with Julia, and that she has been looking forward with impatience to the time when her daughters should be of an age to add in this way new strength to the kingdom. I rather hoped than had faith, that she would listen to your proposals. I thought that perhaps the earnestness of the princess, with the Queen's strong affection for her, together with the weight of your family and name, might pre-

vail. But then I have asked myself, if it were reasonable to indulge such a hope. The Queen is right in stating as she did her dependence, in some sort, upon the people. It is they, as well as she, who are looking forward to this Persian marriage. I know not what discontents would break out were Hormisdas postponed to Piso—Persia to Rome. My position, Lucius, I think a sadder one than Zenobia's. I love Julia as dearly as Zenobia, and you a great deal more than Zenobia does, and would fain see you happy; and yet I love Palmyra I dare not say how much—nor that, if by such an act good might come to my country, I could almost wish that Julia should live in Persia.'

I have within me a better ground of hope than is guessed either by the Queen or Fausta, but yet can name it not. I mention this to you, and pass to other things.

The city has to-day been greatly moved, owing to the expected audience of our ambassadors before the council, and their final answer. The streets are thronged with multitudes not engaged in the active affairs of traffic, but standing in larger or smaller crowds talking, and hearing or telling news, as it arrives from the palace or from abroad.

The die is cast. The ambassadors are dismissed. The decision of the council has been confirmed by the senate, and Varro and Petronius have with their train departed from the city. War therefore is begun. For it was the distinct language of the embassy, that no

other terms need be proposed, nor would be accepted, beside those offered by them. None others have been offered on the part of Palmyra. And the ambassadors have been delayed rather to avoid the charge of unreasonable precipitancy, than in the belief that the public mind would incline to or permit any reply more moderate than that which they have borne back to the emperor.

It is understood that Aurelian, with an army perfectly equipped, stands waiting, ready to start for Asia on the arrival of the ambassadors or their couriers. From your last letters I gather as much. How, again I ask—as I have often asked both myself and the principal persons here—how is it possible there should be but one issue to this contest? Yet from language which I heard in the senate, as well as in the private apartments of the Queen, there is a mad confidence, that after a battle or two on the outskirts of the kingdom, in which they shall conquer as always heretofore, an advantageous peace will end the contest. In the senate, scarce a voice was raised for concession; its mere mention was enough to bring down the most bitter charges of a want of patriotism, a Roman leaning, a sordid regard to the interests of commerce over those of honor, a poor and low-minded spirit. Such as had courage to lift up a warning voice were soon silenced by the universal clamor of the opposite party; and although the war was opposed by some of the ablest men in the kingdom, men inferior to none of those who have come more especially within my notice, and whom I have named to you, yet it is termed a unanimous decision, and so will be reported at Rome.

The simple truth is however that, with the exception of these very few, there is no independent judgment in Palmyra, on great national questions. The Queen is all in all. She is queen, council and senate. Here are the forms of a republican deliberation, with the reality of a despotic will. Not that Zenobia is a despotic prince, in any bad sense of the term, but being of so exalted a character, ruling with such equity and wisdom; moreover having created the kingdom by her own unrivalled energies and genius, it has become the habit of the people to defer to her in all things; their confidence and love are so deep and fervent, that they have no will nor power now, I believe, to oppose her in any measure she might propose. The city and country of Palmyra proper are her property in as real a sense as my five hundred slaves, on my Tiburtine farm, are mine. Nor is it very much otherwise with many of the nearer allied provinces. The same enthusiasm pervades them. Her watchfulness over their interests, her impartiality, her personal oversight of them by means of the frequent passages she makes among them, have all contributed to knit them to her by the closest ties. With the more remote portions of the empire it is very different, and it would require the operation of but slight causes to divide from their allegiance Egypt, Armenia, and the provinces of Asia Minor.

How is not this rashness, this folly, to be deplored! Could the early counsels of Longinus have been but heeded, all had been well. But he is now as much devoted to the will and interests of Zenobia as any in the kingdom, and lends all the energies of his great

mind to the promotion of her cause. He said truly, that he like others is but a slave yoked to her car. His opinion now is, that no concessions would avail to preserve the independent existence of Palmyra. The question lies between war and a voluntary descent to the condition of a Roman province. Nothing less than that will satisfy the ambition and the pride of Rome. The first step may be such as that proposed by Varro—the lopping off of the late conquered provinces, leaving Zenobia the city, the circumjacent territory, and Syria. But a second step would soon follow the first, and the foot of Aurelian would plant itself upon the neck of Zenobia herself. This he felt assured of, both from observation upon the Roman character and history, upon the personal character of Aurelian, and from private advices from Rome. He is now accordingly the moving spirit of the enterprise, going with all his heart and mind into every measure of the Queen.

I am just returned from a singular adventure. My hand trembles as I write. I had laid down my pen and gone forth upon my Arab, accompanied by Milo, to refresh and invigorate my frame after our late carousal—shall I term it?—at the palace. I took my way, as I often do, to the Long Portico, that I might again look upon its faultless beauty and watch the changing crowds. Turning from that, I then amused my vacant mind by posting myself where I could overlook, as if I were indeed the builder or superintendent, the laborers upon the column of Aurelian. I became at length particularly interested in the efforts of a huge elephant, who was employed in dragging up to the foundations

of the column, so that they might be fastened to machines to be then hoisted to their place, enormous blocks of marble. He was a noble animal, and, as it seemed to me, of far more than common size and strength. Yet did not his utmost endeavors appear to satisfy the demands of those who drove him, and who plied without mercy the barbed scourges which they bore. His temper at length gave way. He was chained to a mass of rock, which it was evidently beyond his power to move. It required the united strength of two at least. But this was nothing to his inhuman masters. They ceased not to urge him with cries and blows. One of them at length, transported by that insane fury which seizes the vulgar when their will is not done by the brute creation, laid hold upon a long lance, terminated with a sharp iron goad, long as my sword, and rushing upon the beast, drove it into his hinder part. At that very moment the chariot of the Queen, containing Zenobia herself, Julia, and the other princesses, came suddenly against the column, on its way to the palace. I made every possible sign to the charioteer to turn and fly. But it was too late. The infuriated monster snapped the chains that held him to the stone, at a single bound, as the iron entered him, and trampling to death one of his drivers, dashed forward to wreak his vengeance upon the first object that should come in his way. That, to the universal terror and distraction of the now scattered and flying crowds, was the chariot of the Queen. Her mounted guards, at the first onset of the maddened animal, putting their horses to their speed, by quick leaps escaped. The horses attached to the chariot, springing forward to do

the same, urged by the lash of the charioteer, were met by the elephant with straightened trunk and tail, who, in the twinkling of an eye, wreathed his proboscis round the neck of the first he encountered, and wrenching him from his harness, whirled him aloft and dashed him to the ground. This I saw was the moment to save the life of the Queen, if it was indeed to be saved. Snatching from a flying soldier his long spear, and knowing well the temper of my horse, I ran upon the monster as he disengaged his trunk from the crushed and dying Arabian for a new assault, and drove it with unerring aim into his eye, and through that opening on into the brain. He fell as if a bolt from heaven had struck him. The terrified and struggling horses of the chariot were secured by the now returning crowds, and the Queen and the princesses relieved from the peril which was so imminent, and had blanched with terror every cheek but Zenobia's. She had stood the while, I was told—there being no exertion which she could make—watching with eager and intense gaze my movements, upon which she felt that their safety, perhaps their lives, depended.

It all passed in a moment. Soon as I drew out my spear from the dying animal, the air was rent with the shouts of the surrounding populace. Surely, at that moment I was the greatest, at least the most fortunate, man in Palmyra. These approving shouts, but still more the few words uttered by Zenobia and Julia, were more than recompense enough for the small service I had performed; especially, however, the invitation of the Queen:

‘But come, noble Piso, leave not the work half done;

we need now a protector for the remainder of the way. Ascend, if you will do us such pleasure, and join us to the palace.'

I needed no repeated urging, but taking the offered seat—whereupon new acclamations went up from the now augmented throngs—I was driven, as I conceived, in a sort of triumph to the palace, where passing an hour, which it seems to me held more than all the rest of my life, I have now returned to my apartment, and relate what has happened for your entertainment. You will not wonder that for many reasons my hand trembles, and my letters are not formed with their accustomed exactness.

Again I am interrupted. What can be the meaning of the noise and running to and fro which I hear? Some one with a quick, light foot approaches.

It is now night. The palace is asleep, but I take again my pen to tell you of the accomplishment of the dear object for which I have wandered to this distant spot. Calpurnius is arrived!

The quick, light foot by which I was disturbed was Fausta's. I knew it, and sprang to the door. She met me with her bright and glowing countenance bursting with expression. 'Calpurnius!' said she, 'your brother! is here'—and seizing my hand drew me to the apartment where he sat by the side of Gracchus; Isaac, with his inseparable pack, standing near.

I need not, as I cannot, describe our meeting. It was the meeting of brothers—yet of strangers—and a confusion of wonder, curiosity, vague expectation,

and doubt, possessed the soul of each. I trust and believe, that notwithstanding the different political bias which sways each, the ancient ties which bound us together as brothers will again unite us. The countenance of Calpurnius, though dark and almost stern in its general expression, yet unbends and relaxes frequently and suddenly, in a manner that impresses you forcibly with an inward humanity as the presiding though often concealed quality of his nature. I can trace faintly the features which have been stamped upon my memory—and the form too—chiefly by the recollected scene of that bright morning, when he with our elder brother and venerable parent gave me each a last embrace, as they started for the tents of Valerian. A warmer climate has deepened the olive of his complexion, and at the same time added brilliancy to an eye by nature soft as a woman's. His Persian dress increases greatly the effect of his rare beauty, yet I heartily wish it off, as it contributes more I believe than the lapse of so many years to separate us. He will not seem and feel as a brother till he returns to the costume of his native land. How great this power of mere dress is upon our affections and our regard, you can yourself bear witness, when those who parted from you to travel in foreign countries have returned metamorphosed into Greeks, Egyptians, or Persians, according to the fashions that have struck their foolish fancies. The assumed and foreign air chills the untravelled heart as it greets them. They are no longer the same. However the reason may strive to overcome what seems the mere prejudice of a wayward nature, we strive in vain—nature will be uppermost—

and many, many times have I seen the former friendships break away and perish.

I could not but be alive to the general justness of the comparison instituted by Isaac, between Calpurnius and Julia. There are many points of resemblance. The very same likeness in kind that we so often observe between a brother and sister—such as we have often remarked in our nephew and niece, Drusus and Lavinia—whose dress being changed, and they are changed.

No sooner had I greeted and welcomed my brother, than I turned to Isaac and saluted him, I am persuaded, with scarcely less cordiality.

‘I sincerely bless the gods,’ said I, ‘that you have escaped the perils of two such passages through the desert, and are safe in Palmyra. May every wish of your heart, concerning your beloved Jerusalem, be accomplished. In the keeping of Demetrius will you find not only the single talent agreed upon in case you returned, but the two which were to be paid had you perished. One such tempest upon the desert, escaped, is more and worse than death itself met softly upon one’s bed.’

‘Now, Jehovah be praised,’ ejaculated Isaac, ‘who himself has moved thy heart to this grace! Israel will feel this bounty through every limb, it will be to her as the oil of life.’

‘And my debt,’ said Calpurnius, ‘is greater yet, and should in reason be more largely paid. Through the hands of Demetrius I will discharge it.’

‘We are all bound to you,’ said Fausta, ‘more than words can tell or money pay.’

'You owe more than you are perhaps aware of to the rhetoric of Isaac,' added Calpurnius. 'Had it not been for the faithful zeal and cunning of your messenger in his arguments not less than his contrivances, I had hardly now been sitting within the walls of Palmyra.'

'But then again, noble Roman,' said Isaac, 'to be honest, I ought to say what I said not—for it had not then occurred—in my letter to thy brother, how by my indiscretion I had nearly brought upon myself the wrath, even unto death, of a foul Persian mob, and so sealed thy fate together with my own. Ye have heard doubtless of Manes the Persian, who deems himself some great one, and sent of God? It was noised abroad ere I left Palmyra, that for failing in a much boasted attempt to work a cure by miracle upon the Prince Hormisdas, he had been strangled by order of Sapor. Had he done so, his love of death-doing had at length fallen upon a proper object, a true child of Satan. But as I can testify, his end was not such, and is not yet. He still walks the earth, poisoning the air he breathes, and deluding the souls of men. Him I encountered one day, the very day I had despatched thy letter, in the streets of Ecbatana, dogged at the heels by his twelve ragged apostles, dragging along their thin and bloodless limbs, that seemed each step ready to give way beneath the weight, little as it was, they had to bear. Their master, puffed up with the pride of a reformer, as forsooth he holds himself, stalked by at their head, drawing the admiration of the besotted people by his great show of sanctity, and the wise saws which every now and then he let drop for the edification of such as heard.

Some of these sayings fell upon my ear, and who was I, to hear them and not speak? Ye may know that this false prophet has made it his aim to bring into one the Magian and Christian superstitions, so that by such incongruous and deadly mixture he might feed the disciples of those two widely sundered religions, retaining, as he foolishly hoped, enough of the faith of each to satisfy all who should receive the compound. In doing this he hath cast dirt upon the religion of the Jew, blasphemously teaching that our sacred books are the work of the author of evil, while those of Christ are by the author of good. With more zeal, it must be confessed, than wisdom, seeing where I was and why I was there, I resisted this father of lies, and withstood him to his face. ‘Who art thou, bold blasphemer,’ I said, ‘that takest away the Godhead, breaking into twain that which is infinite and indivisible? Who art thou to tread into the dust the faith of Abraham, and Moses, and the prophets, imputing their words, uttered by the spirit of Jehovah, to the great enemy of mankind? I wonder, people of Ecbatana, that the thunders of God sleep, and strike him not to the earth as a rebel—nay, that the earth cleaveth not beneath him and swalloweth him not up, as once before the rebels Korah, Dathan, and Abiram;’ and much more in the same mad way, till while I was yet speaking, those lean and hungry followers of his set upon me with violence, crying out against me as a Jew, and stirring up the people, who were nothing unwilling, but fell upon me, and throwing me down, dragged me to a gate of the city, and casting me out as I had been a dead dog, returned themselves like dogs to their vomit—that accursed dish of Mani-

chean garbage. I believed myself for a long while surely dead; and in my half conscious state took shame to myself, as I was bound to do, for meddling in the affairs of Pagan misbelievers—putting thy safety at risk. Through the compassion of an Arab woman dwelling without the walls, I was restored and healed—for whose sake I shall ever bless the Ishmaelite. I doubt not, Roman, while I lay at the hut of that good woman, thou thoughtest me a false man?’

‘I could not but think so,’ said Calpurnius, ‘and after the strong desire of escape which you had at length kindled, I assure you I heaped curses upon you in no stinted measure.’

‘But all has ended well and so all is well,’ said Fausta, ‘and it was perhaps too much to expect, Isaac, that you should stand quietly by and hear the religion of your fathers traduced. You are well rewarded for what you did and suffered, by the light in which your tribe will now regard you, as an almost-martyr, and owing to no want of will, or endeavor on your part, that almost did not end in quite. Hannibal, good Isaac, will now see to your entertainment.’

‘One word if it please you,’ said Isaac, ‘before I depart. The gentile despises the Jew. He charges upon him usury and extortion. He accuses him of avarice. He believes him to subsist upon the very life blood of whomsoever he can draw into his meshes. I have known those who have firm faith that the Jew feeds but upon the flesh and blood of Pagan and Christian infants, whom, by necromantic power, he beguiles from their homes. He is held as the common enemy of man, a universal robber, whom all are bound to hate

and oppress. Reward me now with your belief, better than even the two gold talents I have earned, that all are not such. This is the charity, and all that I would beg; and I beg it of you, for that I love you all, and would have your esteem. Believe that in the Jew there is a heart of flesh as well as in a dog. Believe that some noble ambition visits his mind as well as yours. Credit it not—it is against nature—that any tribe of man is what you make the Jew. Look upon me, and behold the emblem of my tribe. What do you see? A man bent with years and toil; this ragged tunic his richest garb; his face worn with the storms of all climates; a wanderer over the earth; my home—Piso, thou hast seen it—a single room, with my good dromedary's furniture for my bed at night, and my seat by day; this pack my only apparent wealth. Yet here have I now received two gold talents of Jerusalem!—what most would say were wealth enough, and this is not the tythe of that which I possess. What then? Is it for that I love obscurity, slavery, and a beggar's raiment, that I live and labor thus, when my wealth would raise me to a prince's state? Or is it that I love to sit and count my hoarded gains? Good friends, for such you are, believe it not. You have found me faithful and true to my engagements; believe my word also. You have heard of Jerusalem, once the chief city of the East, where stood the great temple of our faith, and which was the very heart of our nation, and you know how it was beleaguered by the Romans, and its very foundations rooted up, and her inhabitants driven abroad as outcasts, to wander over the face of the earth, with every where a country, but no where a

home. And does the Jew, think you, sit down quietly under these wrongs? Trajan's reign may answer that. Is there no patriotism yet alive in the bosom of a Jew? Will every other toil and die for his country and not the Jew? Believe me again, the prayers which go up morning, noon and night, for the restoration of Jerusalem, are not fewer than those which go up for Rome or Palmyra. And their deeds are not less; for every prayer there are two acts. It is for Jerusalem! that you behold me thus in rags, and yet rich. It is for her glory that I am the servant of all and the scorn of all, that I am now pinched by the winters of Byzantium, now scorched by the heats of Asia, and buried beneath the sands of the desert. All that I have and am is for Jerusalem. And in telling you of myself, I have told you of my tribe. What we do and are is not for ourselves, but for our country. Friends, the hour of our redemption draweth nigh. The Messiah treads in the steps of Zenobia! and when the East shall behold the disasters of Aurelian—as it will—it will behold the restoration of that empire, which is destined in the lapse of ages to gather to itself the glory and dominion of the whole earth.'

Saying these words, during which he seemed no longer Isaac the Jew, but the very Prince of the Captivity himself, he turned and took his departure.

Long and earnest conversation now ensued, in which we received from Calpurnius the most exact accounts of his whole manner of life during his captivity; of his early sufferings and disgraces, and his late honors and elevation; and gave in return similar details concerning the history of our family and of Rome, during

the same period of time. I will not pretend to set down the narrative of Calpurnius. It was delivered with a grace which I can by no means transfer to these pages. I trust you may one day hear it from his own lips. Neither can I tell you how beautiful it was to see Fausta hanging upon his words, with a devotion that made her insensible to all else—her varying color and changing expression showing how deeply she sympathized with the narrator. When he had ended, and we had become weary of the excitement of this first interview, Fausta proposed that we should separate to meet again at supper. To this we agreed.

According to the proposal of Fausta, we were again, soon as evening had come, assembled around the table of the princely Gracchus.

When we had partaken of the luxuries of the feast, and various lighter discourse had caused the time to pass by in an agreeable manner, I said thus, turning to my brother :

‘I would, Calpurnius, that the temper of one’s mind could as easily be changed as one’s garments. You now seem to me, having put off your Persian robes, far more like Piso than before. Your dress, though but in part Roman and part Palmyrene, still brings you nearer. Were it wholly Roman it were better. Is nothing of the Persian really put off, and nothing of the Roman put on, by this change?’

‘Whatever of the Persian there was about me,’ replied Calpurnius, ‘I am free to say I have laid aside with my Persian attire. I was a Persian not by choice and preference, I need scarcely assure you, but by a sort of necessity, just as it was with my costume. I

could not procure Roman clothes if I would. I could not help too putting off the Roman—seeing how I was dealt by—and putting on the Persian. Yet I part with whatever of the Persian has cleaved to me without reluctance—would it were so that I could again assume the Roman—but that can never be. But Isaac has already told you all.’

‘Isaac has indeed informed me in his letter from Ecbatana, that you had renounced your country, and that it was the expectation of war with Rome that alone had power to draw you from your captivity. But I have not believed that you would stand by that determination. The days of republican patriotism I know are passed, but even now under the empire our country has claims and her children owe her duties.’

‘The figure is a common one,’ Calpurnius answered, ‘by which our country is termed a parent, and we her children. Allow it just. Do I owe obedience to an unjust or tyrannical parent? to one who has abandoned me in helplessness or exposed me in infancy? Are not the natural ties then sundered?’

‘I think not,’ I replied; ‘no provocation nor injury can justify a parricidal blow. Our parent is our creator—in some sense a God to us. The tie that binds us to him is like no other tie; to do it violence, is not only a wrong, but an impiety.’

‘I cannot think so,’ he rejoined. ‘A parent is our creator, not so much for our good as his own pleasure. In the case of the gods this is reversed: they have given us being for our advantage, not theirs. We lie under obligation to a parent then, only as he fulfils the proper duties of one. When he ceases to be virtuous,

the child must cease to respect. When he ceases to be just, or careful, or kind, the child must cease to love. And from whomsoever else then the child receives the treatment becoming a parent, that person is to him the true parent. It is idle to be governed by names rather than things; it is more, it is mischievous and injurious.'

'I still am of opinion,' I replied, 'that nature has ordained what I have asserted to be an everlasting and universal truth, by the instincts which she has implanted. All men, of all tribes, have united in expressions of horror against him who does violence to his parents. And have not the poets truly painted, when they have set before us the parricide, forever after the guilty act, pursued by the Furies, and delivered over to their judicial torments?'

'All instincts,' he replied, 'are not to be defended: some animals devour their own young as soon as born. Vice is instinctive. If it be instinctive to honor, and love, and obey a vicious parent, to be unresisting under the most galling oppression, then I say, the sooner reason usurps the place of instinct the safer for mankind. No error can be more gross or hurtful, than to respect vice because of the person in whom it is embodied, even though that person be a parent. Vice is vice, injustice is injustice, wrong is wrong, where-soever they are found; and are to be detested and withstood. But I might admit that I am in an error here; and still maintain my cause by denying the justice of the figure by which our country is made our parent, and our obligations to her made to rest on the same ground. It is mere fancy, it is a nullity, unless it be true, as I think it is, that it has been the source

of great mischiefs to the world, in which case it cannot be termed a nullity, but something positively pernicious. What age of the world can be named when an insane devotion to one's country has not been the mother of war upon war, evil upon evil, beyond the power of memory to recount? Patriotism, standing for this instinctive slavery of the will, has cursed as much as it has blessed mankind. Men have not reasoned, they have only felt: they have not inquired, is the cause of my country just—but is it her cause? That has ever been the cry in Rome. "Our country! our country!—right or wrong—our country!" It is a maxim good for conquest and despotism; bad, for peace and justice. It has made Rome mistress of the world, and at the same time the scourge of the world, and trodden down into their own blood-stained soil the people of many a clime, who had else dwelt in freedom. I am no Roman in this sense, and ought never to have been. Admit that I am not justified in raising my hand against the life of a parent—though if I could defend myself against violence no otherwise, I should raise that hand—I will never allow that I am to approve and second with my best blood all the acts of my country; but when she errs am bound, on the other hand, to blame, and if need be oppose. Why not? What is this country? Men like myself. Who enact the decrees by which I am to be thus bound? Senators, no more profoundly wise perhaps, and no more irreproachably virtuous, than myself. And do I owe their judgments, which I esteem false, a dearer allegiance than I do to my own, which I esteem right and true? Never: such patriotism is a degradation and a vice.

Rome, Lucius, I think to have dealt by me and the miserable men who, with me, fell into the hands of Sapor, after the manner of a selfish, cold-hearted, unnatural parent, and I renounce her, and all allegiance to her. I am from this hour a Palmyrene, Zenobia is my mother, Palmyra my country.'

'But,' I could not but still urge, 'should no distinction be made between your country and her emperor? Is the country to rest under the imputation which is justly perhaps cast upon him? That were hardly right. To renounce Gallienus, were he now emperor, were a defensible act: But why Rome or Aurelian?'

'I freely grant, that had a just emperor been put upon the throne, a man with human feelings, the people, had he projected our rescue or revenge, would have gone with him. But how is their conduct to be defended during the long reign of the son of Valerian? Was such a people as the people of Rome to conform their minds and acts to a monster like him? Was that the part of a great nation? Is it credible that the senate and the people together, had no power to compel Gallienus to the performance of his duties to his own father, and the brave legions who fell with him? Alas! they too wanted the will.'

'O not so, Calpurnius,' I rejoined; 'Gallienus wished the death or captivity of his father, that he might reign. To release him was the last act that wretch could have been urged to do. And could he then have been made to interpose for the others? He might have been assassinated, but all the power of Rome could not have compelled him to a war, the issue of which might have been, by the rescue of Valerian, to lose him his throne.'

‘Then he should have been assassinated. Rome owed herself a greater duty than allegiance to a beast in human form.’

‘But, Calpurnius, you now enjoy your liberty. Why consider so curiously whence it comes? Besides, you have, while in Persia, dwelt in comfort, and at last even in magnificence. The Prince himself has been your companion and friend.’

‘What was it,’ he replied, ‘what was it, when I reflected upon myself, but so much deeper degradation, to find that in spite of myself I was every day sinking deeper and deeper in Persian effeminacy? What was it but the worst wretchedness of all to feel as I did, that I, a Roman and a Piso, was losing my nature as I had lost my country? If any thing served to turn my blood into one hot current of bitterness and revenge, it was this. It will never cool till I find myself, sword in hand, under the banners of Zenobia. Urge me no more: it were as hopeful an endeavor to stem the current of the Euphrates, as to turn me from my purpose. I have reasoned with you because you are a brother, not because you are a Roman.’

‘And I,’ I replied, ‘can still love you, because you are a brother, nor less because you are also a Palmyrene. I greet you as the head of our house, the elder heir of an illustrious name. I still will hope, that when these troubles cease, Rome may claim you as her own.’

‘No emperor,’ he answered, ‘unless he were a Piso, I fear, would permit a renegade of such rank ever to dwell within the walls of Rome. Let me rather hope, that when this war is ended, Portia may exchange Rome for Palmyra, and that here, upon this fair and

neutral ground, the Pisos may once more dwell beneath the same roof.'

'May it be so,' said Gracchus; 'and let not the heats of political opposition change the kindly current of your blood, nor inflame it. You, Lucius Piso, are to remember the provocations of Calpurnius, and are to feel that there was a nobleness in that sensibility to a declension into Persian effeminacy that, to say the least, reflects quite as much honor upon the name of Piso, and even Roman, as any loyalty to an emperor like Gallienus, or that senate filled with his creatures. And you, Calpurnius Piso, are to allow for that instinctive veneration for every thing Roman which grows up with the Roman, and even in spite of his better reason ripens into a bigotry that deserves the name of a crime rather than a virtue, and are to consider, that while in you the growth of this false sentiment has been checked by causes, in respect to which you were the sport of fortune, so in Lucius it has been quickened by other causes over which he also was powerless. But to utter my belief, Lucius I think is now more than half Palmyrene, and I trust yet, if committed as he has been to the further tuition of our patriot Fausta, will be not only in part, but altogether of our side.'

'In the mean time, let us rejoice,' said Fausta, 'that the noble Calpurnius joins our cause. If we may judge by the eye, the soft life of a Persian Satrap has not quite exhausted the native Roman vigor.'

'I have never intermitted,' replied Calpurnius, 'martial exercises: especially have I studied the whole art of horsemanship, so far as the chase and military discipline can teach it. It is in her cavalry, as I learn,

that Zenobia places her strength : I shall there, I trust, do her good service.'

'In the morning,' said Fausta, 'it shall be my office to bring you before our Queen.'

'And now, Fausta,' said Gracchus, 'bring your harp, and let music perfect the harmony which reason and philosophy have already so well begun ; music—which for its power over our souls, may rather be held an influence of the gods, a divine breathing, than any thing of mortal birth.'

'I fear,' said Fausta, as she touched the instrument—the Greek and not the Jewish harp—'I shall still further task your philosophy ; for I can sing nothing else than the war-song, which is already heard all through the streets of Palmyra, and whose author, it is said, is no less than our chief spirit, Longinus. Lucius, you must close your ears.'

'Never, while your voice sounds, though bloody treason were the only burden.'

'You are a gentle Roman.'

Then after a brief but fiery prelude, which of itself struck by her fingers was enough to send life into stones, she broke forth into a strain, abrupt and impassioned, of wild Pindaric energy, that seemed the very war-cry of a people striking and dying for liberty. Her voice, inspired by a soul too large for mortal form, rang like a trumpet through the apartment, and seemed to startle the gods themselves at their feast. As the hymn moved on to its perfect close, and the voice of Fausta swelled with the waxing theme, Calpurnius seemed like one entranced ; unconsciously he had left his seat, and there, in the midst of the room, stood be-

fore the divine girl converted to a statue. As she ceased, the eyes of Calpurnius fell quickly upon me, with an expression which I instantly interpreted, and should have instantly returned, but that we were all alike roused out of ourselves by the loud shouts of a multitude without the palace, who apparently had been drawn together by the far-reaching tones of Fausta's voice, and who, as soon as the last strings of the harp were touched, testified their delight by reiterated and enthusiastic cries.

'When Zabdas and Zenobia fail,' said Calpurnius, 'you, daughter of Gracchus, may lead the armies of your country by your harp and voice; they would inspire not less than the fame of Cæsar or Aurelian.'

'But be it known to you, Piso,' said Gracchus, 'that this slight girl can wield a lance or a sword, while centaur-like she grows to the animal she rides, as well as sweep these idle strings.'

'I will learn of her in either art,' replied my brother. 'As I acknowledge no instinct which is to bind me to an unjust parent, but will give honor only where there is virtue, so on the field of war I will enlist under any leader in whom I behold the genius of a warrior, be that leader man or woman, boy or girl.'

'I shall be satisfied,' said Fausta, 'to become your teacher in music, that is, if you can learn through the force of example alone. Take now another lesson. Zenobia shall teach you the art of war.'

With these words she again passed her fingers over her harp, and after strains of melting sweetness, prolonged till our souls were wholly subdued to the sway of the gentler emotions, she sang in words of Sappho,

the praise of love and peace, twin-sisters. And then as we urged, or named to her, Greek or Roman airs which we wished to hear, did she sing and play till every sense was satisfied and filled.

It needs not so much sagacity as I possess to perceive the effect upon my brother of the beauty and powers of Fausta. He speaks with difficulty when he addresses her, and while arguing or conversing with me or Gracchus, his eye seeks her countenance, and then falls as it encounters hers, as if he had committed some crime. Fausta, I am sure, is not insensible to the many rare and striking qualities of Calpurnius: but her affections can be given only where there is a soul of very uncommon elevation. Whether Calpurnius is throughout that, which he seems to be, and whether he is worthy the love of a being like Fausta, I know not yet, though I am strong in faith that it is so. In the mean time, a mutual affection is springing up and growing upon the thin soil of the fancy, and may reach a quick and rank luxuriance before it shall be discovered that there is nothing more substantial beneath. But why indulge a single doubt? only I suppose, because I would rather Rome should fall than that any harm come to the heart of Fausta.

It was a little after the noon of this day that the ambassadors, Petronius and Varro, passed from out the gates of Palmyra, bearing with them a virtual declaration of war.

The greatest excitement prevails. The streets are already filled with sights and sounds admonitory of the scenes which are soon to be disclosed. There is the

utmost enthusiasm in every quarter, and upon every face you behold the confidence and pride of those who, accustomed to conquest, are about to extend their dominion over new territories, and to whom war is a game of pleasure rather than a dark hazard, that may end in utter desolation and ruin. Intrenched within these massy walls, the people of this gay capital cannot realize war. Its sounds have ever been afar off, beyond the wide sweep of the deserts; and will be now, so they judge—and they are scarcely turned for a moment, or by the least remove, from their accustomed cares or pleasures.

LETTER XII.

I LAMENT to hear of the disturbance among your slaves, and of the severity with which you have thought it necessary to proceed against them. You will bear me witness that I have often warned you that the cruelty with which Tiro exercised his authority would lead to difficulties, if not to violence and murder. I am not surprised to learn his fate: I am indeed very free to say that I rejoice at it. I rejoice not that you are troubled in your affairs, but that such an inhuman overseer as Tiro, a man wholly unworthy the kindness and indulgence with which you have treated him, should at length be overtaken by a just retribution. That the poison took effect upon his wife and children I sincerely regret, and wish that some other mode of destruction had been chosen, whose effects could have been safely directed and limited, for I do not believe that the least ill-will existed toward Claudia and her little ones. But rest satisfied, I beseech you, with the punishments already inflicted: enough have been scourged, put to the torture, and crucified: let the rest escape. Remember your disposition, now indulgent, now tyrannical, and lay a restraint upon your passions if you would save yourself from lasting regrets. It is some proof that you are looking to yourself more than formerly, that so many have been imprisoned to wait a further deliberation, and that you are willing first to ask my opinion. Be assured that further crucifixions would serve only to exasperate those who survive, and

totally alienate them from you, so that your own life, instead of being the more safe, would be much less so. They will be driven to despair, and say that they may as well terminate their wretched lives in one way as another, and so end all at once by an assault upon yourself and Lucilia, which, while it destroyed you, and so glutted their revenge, could do no more than destroy them—a fate which they dread now—but which at all times, owing to their miseries, they dread much less than we suppose, and so are more willing than we imagine to take the lives of their masters or governors, not caring for death themselves. A well-timed lenity would now be an act of policy as well as of virtue. Those whom you have reprieved, being pardoned, will be bound to you by a sort of gratitude—those of them at least who put a value upon their lives—and now that Tiro is fairly out of the way, and his scourgings at an end, they will all value their lives at a higher rate than before.

But let me especially intercede for Laco and Cælia, with their children. It was they, who, when I have been at your farm, have chiefly attended upon me; they have done me many acts of kindness beyond the mere duties of their office, and have ever manifested dispositions so gentle, and so much above their condition, that I feel sure they cannot be guilty of taking any part in the crime. They have been always too happy, to put their all at risk by such an attempt. Be assured they are innocent; and they are too good to be sacrificed merely for the effect. There are others, wretches in all respects, who will serve for this, if enough have not already suffered.

When will sentiments of justice assert their supremacy in the human mind? When will our laws and institutions recognise the rights inherent in every man, as man, and compel their observance? When I reflect that I myself possess, upon one only of my estates, five hundred slaves, over whom I wield despotic power, and that each one of these differs not from myself except in the position into which fortune and our laws have cast him, I look with a sort of horror upon myself, the laws, and my country which enacts and maintains them. But if we cannot at once new-model our institutions and laws, we can do something. By a strict justice, and by merciful treatment, we can mitigate the evils of their lot who are within our own power. We can exercise the authority and temper of fathers, and lay aside in a greater degree than we do, the air and manner of tyrant. When upon the fields of every farm, as I ride through our interior, I hear the lash of the task-master, and behold the cross rearing aloft its victim to poison the air with fœtid exhalations and strike terror into all who toil within their reach, I hate my country and my nature, and long for some power to reveal itself, I care not of what kind nor in what quarter, capable to reform a state of society, rotten as this is to its very heart.

You yourself, advocate as you are for the existing order of things, would be agitated alternately by horror and compassion, were I to relate to you the scenes described to me by Milo, as having a thousand times been witnessed by him when in the service of Gallienus. To torture and destroy his slaves, by the most ingenious devices of cruelty, was his daily pastime.

They were purchased for this very end. When I see you again, I will give you instances with which I could not soil these pages. Antiochus, were he in Rome, would be a monster of the same stamp. But all this is, as I have often mentioned, a necessary accompaniment of such power as the laws confer upon the owner.

And now, that war has actually broken out between Palmyra and Rome, you will wish to know what part I intend to take. Your letters imply, that in such an event you would expect my immediate return. But this pleasure must, for the present at least, be deferred. I am too deeply interested in too many here, to allow me to forsake them in a time of so much anxiety, and as I think of peril too. Zenobia's full consent I have already obtained: indeed, she is now desirous that I should remain. The services that I have accidentally rendered her have increased the regard with which she treats me. I confess too that I am less unwilling to remain than I was, out of a rooted disapprobation of the violent course of Aurelian. I cannot, as Calpurnius has done, renounce my country; but I can blame our emperor. His purposes are without a color of justice: nor are they only unjust and iniquitous, they are impolitic. I can enter fully into and defend the feelings and arguments of Palmyra in this direction. Her cause is in the main a just one. She has done somewhat indeed to provoke a sensitive and jealous mind; but nothing to warrant the step which Aurelian is taking. And when I counsel peace, and by concessions too, I do it not because I hold it right that such

concessions should be made, but because I deem it frantic on the part of Zenobia to encounter the combined power of Rome, under such a soldier as Aurelian. My sympathies are accordingly enlisted in behalf of this people as a people ; my heart is closely bound to both the house of Gracchus and Zenobia ; and therefore I cannot leave them. I shall not bear arms against my country ; I think I would sooner die ; but in any case of extremity I shall not wear a sword in vain, if by using it I can save the life or honor of persons dear to me. I am firm in the belief, that no such extremity will ever present itself ; but should it come, I am ready for it. I cannot but hope that a battle, one or more, upon the outskirts of the empire, will satisfy the pride of Aurelian, and convince the Queen, that to contend for empire with him, and Rome at his back, is vain, and that negotiation will therefore end what passion has begun. I shall expect no other issue than this. Then, having done all here, I shall return to Italy, if the Queen relents not, to pass an unhappy life upon the Tiburtine farm.

Preparations of every kind for the approaching contest are going forward with activity. The camp of the Queen is forming without the walls upon a wide and beautiful plain, stretching towards the south. One army will be formed here chiefly consisting of cavalry, in which lies the strength of the Queen, and another in the vicinity of Antioch, where a junction will be effected, and whence the whole will move either toward the Bosphorus or Egypt, according to the route which, it shall be learned, Aurelian intends to pursue.

During these few days that have elapsed since the departure of the ambassadors, the stir and confusion incident to such a time have continually increased. In the streets, I meet scarce any who are not engaged in some service connected with the army. Troops of soldiers are forming, exercising at their arms, and passing from the city as they are severally equipped to join the camp. The shops of the armorers resound with the blows of an innumerable body of artisans manufacturing or repairing those brilliant suits of steel for which the cavalry of Zenobia are distinguished. Immense repositories of all the various weapons of our modern warfare, prepared by the Queen against seasons of emergency, furnish forth arms of the most perfect workmanship and metal to all who offer themselves for the expedition. Without the walls in every direction, the eye beholds clouds of dust raised by different bodies of the Queen's forces, as they pour in from their various encampments to one central point. Trains of sumptuary elephants and camels, making a part of every legion as it comes up, and stretching their long lines from the verge of the plain to the very walls, contribute a fresh beauty and interest to the scene.

Within the camp, whatever the tumult and confusion may be without, every thing is conducted with the most admirable order, and with the observance of a discipline as exact, if not as severe, as that of Vespasian, or Aurelian himself. Here are to be seen the commanders of the chief divisions of the army inspecting the arms and equipments of each individual soldier, and not with less diligence inquiring into the mettle and points of the horse he rides. Every horse, pronounced in any

way defective, is rejected from the service and another procured. The Queen's stable has been exhausted in providing in this manner substitutes for such as have been set aside as unworthy.

Zenobia herself is the most active and laborious of all. She is in every place, seeing with her own eyes that every arrangement and provision ordered to be made is completed, and that in the most perfect manner. All the duties of a general are performed by her, with a freedom, a power, and a boldness, that fills one with astonishment who is acquainted with those opposite qualities which render her, as a woman, the most lovely and fascinating of her sex. She is seen sometimes driving rapidly through the streets in an open chariot, of the antique form ; but more frequently on horseback, with a small body of attendants, who have quite enough to do to keep pace with her, so as to catch from her the orders which she rapidly issues, and then execute them in every part of the camp and city. She inspires all who behold her with her own spirit. In every soldier and leader you behold something of the same alertness and impetuosity of movement which are so remarkable in her. She is the universal model ; and the confidence in the resources of her genius is universal and boundless. 'Let our courage and conduct,' they say, 'be only in some good proportion to our Queen's, and we may defy Rome and the world.' As the idea of naught but conquest ever crosses their minds, the animation—even gayety that prevails in the camp and throughout the ranks is scarcely to be believed, as it is, I doubt not, unparalleled in the history of war. Were she a goddess, and omnipotent, the trust in her could not be more unwavering.

I have just encountered Calpurnius returning from the palace of the Queen, whither he has been to offer his services during the war, in any capacity in which it might please her to employ him.

‘What was your reception?’ said I.

‘Such as Fausta had assured me of. She gives me a hearty welcome to her camp, and assigns me a legion of horse. And, in addition, one more charge dearer and yet more anxious a thousand-fold.’

‘May I know it?’ said I, but readily surmising the nature of it.

‘It is,’ he replied with visible emotion, ‘Fausta herself.’

‘It is fixed then that she accompanies the Queen?’

‘She entreats, and the Queen consents.’

‘Would that she could be turned from this purpose, but I suppose the united power of the East could not do it. To be near Zenobia, and if evil should befall her to share it, or to throw herself as a shield between the Queen and death, is what she pants for more than for renown, though it should be double that of Semiramis.’

‘Lucius, have you urged every reason, and used all the power you possess over her, to dissuade her?’

‘I have done all I have dared to do. The decisions of some minds, you know, with the motives which sway them, we too much revere to oppose to them our own. Girl though Fausta be, yet when I see by the lofty expression of her countenance, her firm and steadfast eye, that she has taken her part, I have no assurance sufficient to question the rectitude of her determination,

or essay to change it. I have more faith in her than in myself.'

'Yet it must never be,' said my brother with earnestness; 'she could never support the fatigues of such a campaign, and it must not be permitted that she should encounter the dangers and horrors of actual combat. I have learned that at the palace which, while it has dismissed the most painful apprehensions of one sort, has filled me with others more tolerable, but yet intolerable. How, Lucius, has it happened that your heart, soft in most of its parts, on one side has been adamant?'

'The way of the heart,' I said, 'like the way of Providence, is mysterious. I know not. Perhaps it was that I knew her longer in Rome and more closely than you, and the sentiment always uppermost toward her has been that of a brother's love. Hers toward me has never been other than the free, unrestrained affection of a sister. But you have not seen the Princess?'

'I have not.'

'That will complete the explanation. The Queen rejects me; but I do not despair. But to return to Fausta. As no force could withhold her from the army, I thank the gods that in you she will find a companion and defender, and that to you the Queen has committed her. Fail her not, Calpurnius, in the hour of need. You do not know, for your eye has but taken in her outward form, what a jewel, richer than Eastern monarch ever knew, is entrusted to your care. Keep it as you would your own life, nay, your life will be well given for its safety. Forgive me, if in this I seem to charge you as an elder. Remember that you

I do not know, Fausta I do. Of you I scarcely know more than that you are a Piso, and that the very soul of honor ought to dwell within you. The Queen's ready confidence in you, lays you under obligations heavy as injunctions from the gods to fidelity. If, as you journey on toward Antioch, the opportunities of the way throw you together, and your heart is won by your nearer knowledge of her sweet qualities as well as great ones, as your eye has already been, ask not, seek not, for hers, but after a close questioning of yourself whether you are worthy of her. Of your life and the true lineaments of your soul, you know every thing, she knows nothing; but she is more free and unsuspecting than a child, and without looking further than the show and color of honesty and truth, will surrender up her heart where her fancy leads, trusting to find according to her faith, and to receive all that she gives. Brother though you be, I here invoke the curses of the gods upon your head, if the faintest purpose of dishonest or deceptive dealing have place within you.'

'Your words,' said Calpurnius in reply—a wholesome and natural expression of indignation spreading over his countenance, which inspired more confidence than any thing he could say—'your words, Lucius, are earnest and something sharp. But I bear them without complaint, for the sake of the cause in which you have used them. I blame you not. It is true, I am a stranger both to yourself and Fausta, and it were monstrous to ask confidence before time has proved me. Leave it all to time. My conduct under this trust shall be my trial. Not till our return from Antioch will I aim at more than the happiness to be her com-

panion and guard. The noble Otho will be near us, to whom you may commit us both.'

'Brother,' I rejoined, 'I doubt you not; but where our treasure is great, we are tormented by imaginary fears, and we guard it by a thousand superfluous cares. What I have said has implied the existence of doubts and apprehensions, but in sober truth they were forced into existence. My nature from the first has been full of trust in you; but this very promptness to confide, my anxious fears converted to a fault, and urged suspicion as a duty. Your countenance and your words have now inspired me with an assurance, not, I am certain, to be ever shaken, in your virtues. It shall be my joy to impart the same to Gracchus. Fausta shall be left free to the workings of her own mind and heart.'

I should not have been justified, it seems to me, in saying less than this, though I said it with apprehensions, many and grave, of a breach between us, which perhaps time might never heal. It has ended in a deep and settled conviction that the character of Calpurnius is what it at first appears to be. Persian duplicity has made no lodgment within him, of that I am sure. And where you feel sure of sincerity, almost any other fault may be borne.

The army has taken up its march, and the city is deprived of its best and bravest spirits—Zenobia and Fausta, those kindred souls, are gone. How desolate is this vast palace! The loss of Gracchus and Fausta seems the loss of all. A hundred attendant slaves leave it still empty.

A period of the most active preparation has been

closed to-day, by the departure of as well appointed an army as ever issued from the Prætorian camps. It was a spectacle as beautiful as my eyes ever beheld—and as sad. Let me set before you the events of the day.

As I descended to the apartment where we take together our morning meal, and which we were now for the last time to partake in each other's company, I found Fausta already there, and surveying with sparkling eyes and a flushed cheek a suit of the most brilliant armor, which having been made by the Queen's workmen, and by her order, had just now been brought and delivered to her.

'I asked the honor,' said the person with whom she was conversing, 'to bring it myself, who have made it with the same care as the Queen's, of the same materials, and after the same fashion. So it was her order to do. It will set, lady, believe me, as easy as a riding dress, though it be all of the most impenetrable steel. The polish too is such, that neither arrow nor javelin need be feared, they can but touch and glance. Hercules could not indent this surface. Let me reveal to you diverse secret and perfect springs and clasps, the use of which you should be well acquainted with. Yet it differs not so much from that in which you have performed your exercises, but you will readily comprehend the manner of its adjustment.'

He then went through with his demonstrations, and departed.

'This is beautiful indeed!' I said, as I surveyed and handled parts of the armor; 'the eye can hardly bear it when the rays of the sun fall upon it. But I wish it was fairly back again in the shop of the armorer.'

‘That would be,’ said Fausta, ‘only to condemn me to an older and worse one; and if you should wish that away too, it would be only to send me into the ranks defenceless. Surely that you would not do?’

‘The gods forbid! I only mean that I would rather these walls, Fausta, should be your defence. You were not made, whatever you may think, to brave the dangers of the desert and the horrors of a war. Do you remember at the amphitheatre you hid your eyes from the cruel sights of the arena? I doubt not your courage; but it is not after your heart.’

‘From the useless barbarities of the circus I might indeed turn away my eyes, and yet I think with perfect consistency strike my lance into the heart of a man who came against my country or my Queen, nor even blench. But do not suppose that it is with any light or childish joy that I resolve to follow in the steps of Zenobia to the field of slaughter. I would far rather sit here in the midst of security and peace, making mimic war upon my embroidery, or tuning my voice and harp, with Gracchus and you to listen and applaud. But there is that within me that forbids my stay. I am urged from within by a voice which seems as the voice of a god, to do according to my strength, for what may be the last struggle of our country against the encroachments and ambition of Rome. You may deem it little that a woman can do?’

‘I confess I am of opinion that many a substitute could do Palmyra a better service than even the arm of Fausta. A woman may do much and bravely, but a man may do more.’

‘Therein, Lucius, am I persuaded you err. If it

were only that, in the language of Zabdas, I added so many pounds weight of bone and flesh, by adding myself to the Queen's troops, I would stay at home. There are heavier arms than mine, for mine are slight, and sturdier limbs, for mine in spite of the sports of the field are still a woman's. But you know nothing of Palmyra if you know not this, that her victories have been won, not by the arm, but by the presence of Zenobia; to be led to the onset by a woman, and that woman Zenobia—it is this that has infused a spirit and an enthusiasm into our soldiery that has rendered them irresistible. Were it a thousand against ten thousand, not a native Palmyrene would shrink from the trial, with Zenobia at their head. I am not Zenobia, Lucius, but what she can do for an army, I can do for a legion. Mark the sensation, when this morning Zenobia presents herself to the army, and even when Fausta wheels into the ranks, and acknowledge that I have uttered a truth.'

'There must be truth in what you say, for were I in your train I can feel how far I should follow you, and when forsake you. But what you say only fills me with new apprehensions, and renders me the more anxious to detain you. What but certain death awaits you if you are to lead the way?'

'And why should I not die, as well as another? And is it of more consequence that Fausta, the daughter of Gracchus, should die upon a bed of down, and beneath silken canopies, than that the common soldier should, who falls at her side? How could I die better than at the head of a legion, whom, as I fell, I saw

sweeping on like a tempest to emulate and revenge my death?’

‘But Gracchus—has he another Fausta, or another child?’

Her eyes were bent to the ground, and for a few moments she was buried in thought. They were filled with tears as she raised them and said,

‘You may well suppose, Lucius, having witnessed, as you have, what the love is which I bear Gracchus, and how his life is bound up in mine, that this has been my heaviest thought. But it has not prevailed with me to change my purpose, and ought not to do so. Could I look into futurity, and know that while I fell upon the plains of Antioch, or on the sands of the desert, he returned to these walls to wear out, childless and in solitude, the remnant of his days, my weakness I believe would yield, and I should prefer my parent to my country. But the future is all dark. And it may as well be, that either we shall both fall, or both return; or that he may fall and I survive. It is unworthy of me, is it not then, to consider too curiously such chances? The only thing certain and of certain advantage is this—I can do my country, as I deem it, a signal service by joining her forces in this hour of peril. To this I cleave, and leave the rest to the disposal of the gods. But come, urge me no more, Lucius; my mind is finally resolved, and it but serves to darken the remaining hours. See, Gracchus and Calpurnius are come—let us to the tables.’

This last meal was eaten in silence, save the few required words of courtesy.

Soon as it was over, Fausta, springing from her seat,

disappeared, hastening to her apartments. She returned in a few moments, her dress changed and prepared for her armor.

‘Now, Lucius,’ she exclaimed, ‘your hour of duty has come, which is to fit upon me this queenly apparel. Show your dexterity, and prove that you too have seen the wars, by the grace with which you shall do your service.’

‘These pieces differ not greatly,’ I said, ‘from those which I have worn in Gaul and Germany, and were they to be fastened on my own limbs, or a comrade’s, the task were an easy one. I fear lest I may use too rough a hand in binding on this heavy iron.’

‘O, never fear—there, that is well. The Queen’s armorer has said truly; this is easy as a robe of silk. Now these clasps—are they not well made? will they not catch?’

‘The clasps are perfect, Fausta, but my eye is dim. Here—clasp them yourself;’ and I turned away.

‘Lucius, Lucius, are you a Roman, with eyes so melting? Julia were a better hand-maid. But one thing remains, and that must be done by no other hand than yours—crown me now with this helmet.’

I took it from her and placed it upon her head, saying, as I did it, ‘The gods shield you from danger, dear Fausta, and when you have either triumphed or suffered defeat, return you again to this happy roof! Now for my services allow me this reward’—and for the first time since she was a girl I kissed her forehead.

She was now a beautiful vision to behold as ever lighted upon the earth. Her armor revealed with exactness the perfection of her form, and to her uncom-

mon beauty added its own, being of the most brilliant steel, and frequently studded with jewels of dazzling lustre. Her sex was revealed only by her hair, which, parting over her forehead, fell towards either eye, and then was drawn up and buried in her helmet. The ease with which she moved showed how well she had accustomed herself, by frequent exercises, to the cumbersome load she bore. I could hardly believe, as she paced the apartment, issuing her final orders to her slaves and attendants who pressed around, that I was looking upon a woman reared in all the luxury of the East. Much as I had been accustomed to the sight of Zenobia, performing the part of an emperor, I found it difficult to persuade myself, that when I looked upon Fausta, changing so completely her sex, it was any thing more than an illusion.

Gracchus and Calpurnius now joined us, each, like Fausta, arrayed in the armor of the Queen's cavalry.

'Fausta,' said Gracchus hastily, 'the hour is come that we were at the camp; our horses wait us in the court-yard—let us mount. Farewell, Lucius Piso,' continued he, as we moved toward the rear of the palace; 'would you were to make one of our company; but as that cannot be, I bequeath to you my place, my honors, and my house. Be ready to receive us with large hospitality and a philosophical composure, when we return loaded with the laurels of victory and the spoils of your countrymen. It is fortunate, that as we lose you, we have Calpurnius, who seems of the true warrior breed. Never, Lucius, has my eye lighted upon a nobler pair than this. Observe them. The Queen, careful of our Fausta, has given her in special charge to

your brother. I thank her. By his greater activity and my more prudent counsel, I trust to bring her again to Palmyra with a fame not less than Zenobia's.'

'I can spare the fame,' I replied, 'so I see her once more in Palmyra, herself unharmed and her country at peace.'

'Palmyra would no longer be itself without her,' rejoined the father.

We were now in the court-yard, where we found the horses fully caparisoned, awaiting their riders. Fausta's was her favorite Arab, of a jet black color and of a fierce and fiery temper, hardly to be managed by the Saracen, whose sole office it was to attend upon him; while in the hands of Fausta, though still spirited almost to wildness, he was yet docile and obedient. Soon as she was mounted, although before it had been difficult to hold him, he became quiet and calm.

'See the power of woman,' said Gracchus; 'were Antiochus here, he would look upon this as but another proof that the gods are abandoning Palmyra to the sway of women.'

'It is,' said Fausta, 'simply the power of gentleness. My Saracen operates through fear, and I through love. My hand laid softly upon his neck gains more a thousand fold than the lash laid hardly upon his back.'

Mounting my horse, which Milo stood holding for me, we then sallied out of the court-yard gate toward the camp.

The city itself was all pouring forth upon the plains in its vicinity. The crowds choked the streets as they passed out, so that our progress was slow. Arriving at length, we turned toward the pavilion of the Queen,

pitched over against the centre of the army. There we stood, joined by others, awaiting her arrival ; for she had not yet left the palace. We had not stood long, before the braying of trumpets and other warlike instruments announced her approach. We turned, and looking toward the gate of the city, through which we had but now passed, saw Zenobia, having on either side Longinus and Zabdas, and preceded and followed by a select troop of horse, advancing at her usual speed toward the pavilion. She was mounted upon her far-famed white Numidian, for power an elephant, for endurance a dromedary, for fleetness a very Nicæan, and who had been her companion in all the battles by which she had gained her renown and her empire.

Calpurnius was beside himself : he had not before seen her when assuming all her state. ‘Did eye ever look upon aught so like a celestial apparition ? It is a descent from other regions ; I can swear ’t is no mortal—still less a woman. Fausta, this puts to shame your eulogies, swollen as I term them.’

I did not wonder at his amazement, for I myself shared it, though I had seen her so often. The object that approached us truly seemed rather a moving blaze of light than an armed woman, which the eye and the reason declared it to be, with such gorgeous magnificence was she arrayed. The whole art of the armorer had been exhausted in her appointments. The caparison of her steed, sheathed with burnished gold, and thick studded with precious stones of every various hue, reflected an almost intolerable splendor as the rays of a hot morning sun fell upon it. She too herself, being clothed in armor of polished steel, whose own fiery

brightness was doubled by the diamonds—that was the only jewel she wore—sown with profusion all over its more prominent parts, could be gazed upon scarcely with more ease than the sun himself, whose beams were given back from it with undiminished glory. In her right hand she held the long slender lance of the cavalry; over her shoulders hung a quiver well loaded with arrows, while at her side depended a heavy Damascus blade. Her head was surmounted by a steel helmet, which left her face wholly uncovered, and showed her forehead, like Fausta's shaded by the dark hair, which, while it was the only circumstance that revealed the woman, added to the effect of a countenance unequalled for a marvellous union of feminine beauty, queenly dignity, and masculine power. Sometimes it has been her usage, upon such occasions, to appear with arms bare and gloved hands; they were now cased, like the rest of the body, in plates of steel.

‘Calpurnius,’ said Fausta, ‘saw you ever in Persia such horsemanship? See now, as she draws nearer, with what grace and power she moves. Blame you the enthusiasm of this people?’

‘I more than share it,’ he replied; ‘it is reward enough for my long captivity, at last to follow such a leader. Many a time, as Zenobia has in years past visited my dreams, and I almost fancied myself in her train, I little thought that the happiness I now experience was to become a reality. But hark! how the shout of welcome goes up from this innumerable host.’

No sooner was the Queen arrived where we stood, and the whole extended lines became aware of her presence, than the air was filled with the clang of

trumpets and the enthusiastic cries of the soldiery, who waved aloft their arms and made a thousand expressive signs of most joyful greeting. When this hearty salutation, commencing at the centre, had died away along the wings, stretching one way to the walls of the city, and the other toward the desert, Zenobia rode up nearer the lines, and being there surrounded by the ranks which were in front, and by a crowd of the great officers of the army, spoke to them in accordance with her custom. Stretching out her hand, as if she would ask the attention of the multitude, a deep silence ensued, and in a voice clear and strong, she thus addressed them :

‘ Men and soldiers of Palmyra ! Is this the last time that you are to gather together in this glittering array, and go forth as lords of the whole East ? Conquerors in so many wars, are you now about to make an offering of yourselves and your homes to the emperor of Rome ? Am I, who have twice led you to the gates of Ctesiphon, now to be your leader to the footstool of Aurelian ? Are you thinking of any thing but victory ? Is there one in all these ranks who doubts whether the same fate that once befel Probus shall now befall Aurelian ? If there be, let him stand forth ! Let him go and intrench himself within the walls of Palmyra. We want him not. (The soldiers brandished and clashed their arms.) Victory, soldiers, belongs to those who believe. Believe that you can do so, and we will return with a Roman army captive at our chariot wheels. Who should put trust in themselves, if not the men and soldiers of Palmyra ? Whose memory is long enough to reach backward to a defeat ? What was the reign of

Odenatus but an unbroken triumph? Are you now, for the first time, to fly or fall before an enemy? And who the enemy? Forget it not—Rome! and Aurelian! the greatest empire and the greatest soldier of the world. Never before was so large a prize within your reach. Never before fought you on a stage with the whole world for spectators. Forget not too that defeat will be not only defeat, but ruin! The loss of a battle will be not only so many dead and wounded, but the loss of empire! For Rome resolves upon our subjugation. We must conquer or we must perish, and forever lose our city, our throne, and our name. Are you ready to write yourselves subjects and slaves of Rome!—citizens of a Roman province? and forfeit the proud name of Palmyrene?” (Loud and indignant cries rose from the surrounding ranks.) “If not, you have only to remember the plains of Egypt and of Persia; and the spirit that burned within your bosoms then will save you now, and bring you back to these walls, your brows bound about with the garlands of victory. Soldiers! strike your tents! and away to the desert!”

Shouts long and loud, mingled with the clash of arms, followed these few words of the Queen. Her own name was heard above all. “Long live the great Zenobia!” ran along the ranks from the centre to the extremes, and from the extremes back again to the centre. It seemed as if, when her name had once been uttered, they could not cease—through the operation of some charm—to repeat it again and again, coupled too with a thousand phrases of loyalty and affection.

The Queen, as she ended, turned toward the Pavilion, where dismounting she entered, and together with her, her counsellors, the great officers of the army and empire, her family, and friends. Here was passed an hour in the interchange of the words and signs of affection between those who were about to depart upon this uncertain enterprise, and those who were to remain. The Queen would fain inspire all with her light, bold, and confident spirit, but it could not prevail to banish the fears and sorrows that filled many hearts. Julia's eyes never moved from her mother's face, or only to rest on Fausta's, whose hand she held clasped in her own. Zenobia often turned towards her with a look, in which the melting tenderness of the mother contended but too successfully with the calm dignity of the Queen, and bore testimony to the strong affection working at the heart. She would then, saying a word or two, turn away again, and mingle with those who made less demand upon her sympathies. Livia was there too, and the flaxen-haired Faustula—Livia, gay even, through excess of life—Faustula sad and almost terrified at the scene, and clinging to Julia as to her haven of safety. The Cæsars were also there, insignificant as always, but the youngest, Vabalathus, armed for the war; the others are not to be drawn away from the luxuries and pleasures of the city. Antiochus, sullen and silent, was of the number too, stalking with folded arms apart from the company, or else arm in arm with one of his own color, and seeming to be there rather because he feared to be absent, than because he derived any pleasure from the scene. It was with an effort, and with reluctance, that he

came forward from his hiding places, and with supreme awkwardness, yet with an air of haughtiness and pride, paid his court to the Queen.

As he retreated from his audience, the Queen's eye sought me, and approaching me she said, 'Piso, I am not prone to suspicion, and fear is a stranger to my heart: but I am told to distrust Antiochus. I have been warned to observe him. I cannot now do it, for I depart while he remains in Palmyra. It has been thrown out that he has designs of a treasonable nature, and that the Princess Julia is connected with them. He is an object too contemptible to deserve my thought, and I have not been willing so much as to name the circumstance to any of the council. He may prove an amusing and interesting subject for your speculation while we are gone.'

This was said in a partly serious, partly trifling vein. I answered her, saying, 'that I could not but fear lest there might be more foundation for the warnings that had been given her than she was disposed to allow. He was indeed insignificant and contemptible in character, but he was malignant and restless. Many an insect, otherwise every way despicable, is yet armed with a deadly sting. A swarm may conquer even the monarch of the forest. Antiochus, mean as he is, may yet inflict a secret and fatal wound; and he is not alone; there are those who affect him. I believe you have imposed no task which as a Roman I may not innocently perform. Rest assured that if watchfulness of mine may avert the shadow of an evil from your head, it shall not be wanting. I would that you your-

self could look more seriously upon this information, but I perceive you to be utterly incredulous.'

'It is so indeed,' she replied. 'It were better for me perhaps were it otherwise. Had I heeded the rumors which reached me of the base Mæonius, Odenatus had now perhaps been alive and at my side. But it is against the grain of my nature. I can neither doubt nor fear.'

Sounds from without now indicated that the camp was broken up, and the army in motion. The moment of separation had come. The Queen hastily approached her daughters, and impressing a mother's kisses upon them turned quickly away, and springing upon her horse was soon lost to sight as she made her way through the ranks, to assume her place at their head. Fausta lingered long in the embraces of Julia, who, to part with her, seemed as if about to lose as much more as she had just lost in Zenobia.

'These our friends being now gone, let us,' said the Princess, 'who remain, ascend together the walls of the city, and from the towers of the gate observe the progress of the army so long as it shall remain in sight.'

Saying this, we returned to the city, and from the highest part of the walls watched the departing glories of the most magnificent military array I had ever beheld. It was long after noon before the last of the train of loaded elephants sank below the horizon. I have seen larger armies upon the Danube, and in Gaul: but never have I seen one that in all its appointments presented so imposing a spectacle. This was partly owing to the greater proportion of cavalry, and to the

admixture of the long lines of elephants with their burdens, their towers and litters; but more perhaps to the perfectness with which each individual, be he on horse or foot, be he servant, slave or master, is furnished, respecting both arms, armor, and apparel. Julia beheld it, if with sorrow, with pride also.

‘Between an army like this,’ she said, ‘so appointed, and so led and inflamed, and another like that of Rome coming up under a leader like Aurelian, how sharp and deadly must be the encounter! What a multitude of this and that living host, now glorious in the blaze of arms, and burning with desires of conquest, will fall and perish, pierced by weapons, or crushed by elephants, nor ever hear the shout of victory! A horrid death, winding up a feverish dream. And of that number how likely to be Fausta and Zenobia!’

‘Why, sister,’ said Faustula, whom I held, and in pointing out to whom the most remarkable objects of the strange scene I had been occupied, ‘why does our mother love to go away and kill the Romans? I am sure she would not like to kill you,’—looking up in my face,—‘and are not you a Roman? She will not let me hurt even a little fly or ant, but tells me they feel as much to be killed, as if Sapor were to put his great foot on me and tread me into the sand.’

‘But the Romans,’ said Julia, ‘are coming to take away our city from us, and perhaps do us a great deal of harm; and must they not be hindered?’

‘But,’ replied Faustula, ‘would they do it if Zenobia asked them not to do it? Did you ever know any body who could help doing as she asked them? I wish Aurelian could only have come here and heard

her speak, and seen her smile, and I know he would not have wanted to hurt her. If I were a Queen, I would never fight.'

'I do not believe you would,' said I; 'you do not seem as if you could hurt any body or any thing.'

'And now is not Zenobia better than I? I think perhaps she is only going to frighten the Romans, and then coming home again.'

'O no—do not think so,' said Livia; 'has not Zenobia fought a great many battles before this? If she did not fight battles, we should have no city to live in.'

'If it is so good to fight battles, why does she prevent me from quarrelling, or even speaking unkindly? I think she ought to teach me to fight. I do not believe that men or women ought to fight any more than children; and I dare say if they first saw and talked with one another before they fought, as I am told to do, they never would do it. I find that if I talk and tell what I think, then I do not want to quarrel.—See! is that Zenobia? How bright she shines! I wish she would come back.'

'Wait a little while, and she will come again,' said Livia, 'and bring Aurelian perhaps with her. Should you not like to see Aurelian?'

'No, I am sure I should not. I do not want to see any one that does not love Zenobia.'

So the little child ran on, often uttering truths, too obviously truths for mankind to be governed by them, yet containing the best philosophy of life. Truth and happiness are both within easy reach. We miss them because they are so near. We look over them, and grasp at distant and more imposing objects, wrapped in the false charms which distance lends.

During the absence of the Queen and Fausta, we have, in agreement with the promise we made, repeated our visit more than once to the retreat of the Christian Hermit; from whom I have drawn almost all that remains to be known, concerning the truths of his religion. Both Julia and Livia have been my companions. Of the conversations at these visits, I shall hope at some future time to furnish you with full accounts.

In the meanwhile, Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

THESE few days having passed in the manner I have described, our impatience has been relieved by news from the West. We learn that Aurelian, having appointed Illyricum as the central point for assembling his forces, has, marching thence through Thrace, and giving battle on the way to the Goths, at length reached Byzantium, whence crossing the Bosphorus, it is his purpose to subdue the Asiatic provinces, and afterwards advance toward Palmyra. The army of the Queen, judging by the last accounts received by her messengers, must now have reached the neighborhood of Antioch, and there already perhaps have encountered the forces of the Emperor.

The citizens begin at length to put on the appearance of those who feel that something of value is at stake. The Portico is forsaken, or frequented only by such as hope to hear news by going there. The streets are become silent and solitary. I myself partake of the general gloom. I am often at the palace and at the house of Longinus. The dwelling, or rather should I not term it the spacious palace of the minister, affords me delightful hours of relaxation and instruction, as I sit and converse with its accomplished lord, or wander among the compartments of his vast library, or feast the senses and imagination upon the choice specimens of sculpture and painting, both ancient and modern, which adorn the walls, the ceilings, the stair-ways, and, indeed, every part of the extensive interior. Here I

succeed in forgetting the world and all its useless troubles, and am fairly transported into those regions of the fancy, where the airs are always soft and the skies serene, where want is unknown, and solicitations to vice come not, where men are just and true and kind, and women the goddesses we make them in our dreams, and the whole of existence is a calm summer's day, without storm of the inward or outward world. And when upon these delicious moments the philosopher himself breaks in, the dream is not dissolved, but stands rather converted to an absolute reality, for it then shines with the actual presence of a god. It is with unwillingness that I acknowledge my real state, and consent to return to this living world of anxieties and apprehensions in which I now dwell.

I am just returned from the palace and the Princess Julia. While there seated in conversation with her, Longinus, and Livia, a courier was suddenly announced from Zenobia. He entered, wo stamped upon his features, and delivered letters into the hands of Longinus. Alas! Alas! for Palmyra. The intelligence is of disaster and defeat! The countenance of the Greek grew pale as he read. He placed the despatches in silence in the hands of Julia, having finished them, and hastily withdrew.

The sum of the news is this. A battle has been fought before Antioch, and the forces of the Queen completely routed. It appears that upon the approach of Aurelian, the several provinces of Asia Minor, which by negotiation and conquest had by Zenobia been connected with her kingdom, immediately returned to their

former allegiance. The cities opened their gates and admitted the armies of the conqueror. Tyana alone of all the Queen's dominions in that quarter opposed the progress of the Emperor, and this strong-hold was soon by treachery delivered into his power. Thence he pressed on without pause to Antioch, where he found the Queen awaiting him. A battle immediately ensued. At first, the Queen's forces obtained decided advantages, and victory seemed ready to declare for her as always before, when the gods decreed otherwise, and the day was lost—but lost, in the indignant language of the Queen, 'not in fair and honorable fight, but through the baseness of a stratagem rather to have been expected from a Carthaginian than the great Aurelian.'

'Our troops,' she writes, 'had driven the enemy from his ground at every point. Notwithstanding the presence of Aurelian, and the prodigies of valor by which he distinguished himself anew, and animated his soldiers, our cavalry, led by the incomparable Zabdas, bore him and his legions backwards, till apparently discomfited by the violence of the onset the Roman horse gave way and fled in all directions. The shout of victory arose from our ranks, which now broke, and in the disorder of a flushed and conquering army, scattered in hot pursuit of the flying foe. Now, when too late, we saw the treachery of the enemy. Our horse, heavy-armed as you know, were led on by the retreating Romans into a broken and marshy ground, where their movements were in every way impeded, and thousands were suddenly fixed immovable in the deep morass. At this moment, the enemy, by preconcerted signals, with inconceivable rapidity, being light-armed, formed;

and, returning upon our now scattered forces, made horrible slaughter of all who had pushed farthest from the main body of the army. Dismay seized our soldiers, the panic spread, increased by the belief that a fresh army had come up and was entering the field, and our whole duty centered in forming and covering our retreat. This, chiefly through the conduct of Calpurnius Piso, was safely effected; the Romans being kept at bay while we drew together, and then under cover of the approaching night fell back to a new and strong position.

‘I attempt not, Longinus, to make that better which is bad. I reveal the whole truth, not softening nor withholding a single feature of it, that your mind may be possessed of the exact state of our affairs, and know how to form its judgments. Make that which I write public, to the extent and in the manner that shall seem best to you.

‘After mature deliberation, we have determined to retreat further yet, and take up our position under the walls of Emesa. Here, I trust in the gods, we shall redeem that which we have lost.’

In a letter to Julia the Queen says, ‘Fausta has escaped the dangers of the battle; selfishly perhaps dividing her from Piso, she has shared my tent and my fortunes, and has proved herself worthy of every confidence that has been reposed in her. She is my inseparable companion in the tent, in the field, and on the road, by night and by day. Give not way to despondency, dear Julia. Fortune, which has so long smiled upon me, is not now about to forsake me. There is no day so long and bright that clouds do not sail by and cast

their little shadows. But the sun is behind them. Our army is still great and in good heart. The soldiers receive me, whenever I appear, with their customary acclamations. Fausta shares this enthusiasm. Wait without anxiety or fear for news from Emesa.'

When we had perused and re-perused the despatches of the Queen, and were brooding in no little despondency over their contents, Longinus re-entering said to me,

'And what, Piso, may I ask, is your judgment of the course which Aurelian will now pursue? I see not that I can offend in asking, or you in answering. I have heretofore inclined to the belief that Rome, having atoned her injured honor by a battle, would then prefer to convert Palmyra into a useful ally, by the proposal of terms which she could accept; terms which would leave her an independent existence as formerly, in friendly alliance with, though in no sense subject to Rome. But neither preceding the battle at Antioch, nor since, does it appear that terms have been so much as proposed or discussed. I can hardly believe that Aurelian, even if victory should continue to sit upon his eagles, would desire to drive the Queen to extremities, and convert this whole people into a united and infuriated enemy. If he be willing to do this, he little understands the best interests of Rome, and proves only this, that though he may be a good soldier, he is a bad sovereign, and really betrays his country while achieving the most brilliant victories.'

'I am obliged to say,' I replied, 'that I have wavered in my judgment. Sometimes, when I have thought of policy, of the past services of Palmyra, and of Persia, I have deemed it hardly possible that Aurelian should

have had any other purpose in this expedition than to negotiate with Zenobia, under the advantages of an armed force ; that at the most and worst, a single battle would suffice, and the differences which exist be then easily adjusted. But then, when again I have thought of the character of Aurelian, I have doubted these conclusions, and believed that conquest alone will satisfy him ; and that he will never turn back till he can call Palmyra a Roman province. From what has now transpired at Antioch, and especially from what has not transpired, I am strengthened in this last opinion. One or the other must fall. I believe it has come to this.'

'One or the other may fall at Emesa,' said Livia, 'but no power can ever force the walls of Palmyra.'

'I am ready to believe with you, Princess,' said Longinus, 'but I trust never to see a Roman army before them. Yet if your last judgment of Aurelian be the true one, Piso, it may happen. We are not a power to pour forth the hordes of Rome or Germany. We have valor, but not numbers.'

'Ought not,' said Julia, 'every provision to be made, even though there be but the remotest possibility of the city sustaining a siege?'

'The most fruitful imagination,' replied Longinus, 'could hardly suggest a single addition to what is already done, to render Palmyra impregnable. And long before the food now within the walls could be exhausted, any army, save one of Arabs of the desert, lying before them, must itself perish. But these things the council and senate will maturely weigh.'

Longinus departed.

At the same moment that he left the apartment, that

Indian slave whom I have often seen sitting at the feet of the Queen entered where we were, and addressing a few words to the Princess Julia again retreated. I could not but remark again, what I had remarked before, her graceful beauty, and especially the symmetry of her form and elasticity of her step. There was now also an expression in the countenance which, notwithstanding its dark beauty, I liked not, as I had often before liked it not, when I had seen her in the presence of Zenobia.

‘Princess,’ said I, ‘is the slave who has just departed sincere in her attachment to Zenobia?’

‘I cannot doubt it,’ she replied; ‘at least I have observed nothing to cause me to doubt it. Thinking herself injured and degraded by Zenobia, she may perhaps feel toward her as the captive feels toward the conqueror. But if this be so, the lip breathes it not. To the Queen she is, as far as the eye may judge, fondly attached, and faithful to the trusts reposed in her.’

‘But why,’ I asked, ‘thinks she herself injured and degraded? is she not what she seems to be, a slave?’

‘She is a slave by the chances of fortune and war, not by descent or purchase. She was of the household of Sapor, when his tents, wives, and slaves fell into the hands of Odenatus, and by him, as we learned, had been taken in his wars with an Indian nation. In her own country she was a princess, and were she now there, were queen. Zenobia’s pride is gratified by using her for the purposes she does, nor has it availed to intercede in her behalf. Yet has it always seemed as if a strong attachment drew the fair slave to our mother,

and sure I am that Zenobia greatly esteems her, and, save in one respect, maintains and holds her rather as an equal than inferior. We all love her. Others beside yourself have questioned her truth, but we have heeded them not. Upon what, may I ask, have you founded a doubt of her sincerity ?

‘ I can scarcely say,’ I rejoined, ‘ that I have ground to doubt her sincerity. Indeed, I know nothing of her but what you have now rehearsed, except that, a few days since, as I retired from the palace, I observed her near the eastern gate in earnest conversation with Antiochus. Soon as her eye caught me, although at a great distance, she hastily withdrew into the palace, while Antiochus turned toward the neighboring street.’

Julia smiled. ‘ Ah,’ said she, ‘ our cousin Antiochus, were he to lose all hope of me, would hasten to throw himself at the feet of the beautiful Sindarina. When at the palace, his eyes can hardly be drawn from her face. I have been told he exalts her above her great mistress. Were Antiochus king, I can hardly doubt that Sindarina were queen. His visit to the palace must have been to her alone. Livia, have you received him since the departure of Zenobia ?’

Her sister had not seen him. I said no more. But never have I read aright the human countenance, if in her there be not hidden designs of evil. I knew not before this interview her history. This supplies a motive for a treacherous turn, if by it her freedom or her fortune might be achieved. I have mentioned my suspicions to Longinus, but he sees nothing in them.

The intelligence thus received from Antioch has

effectually sobered the giddy citizens of Palmyra. They are now of opinion that war really exists, and that they are a party concerned. The merchants, who are the princes of the place, perceiving their traffic to decline or cease, begin to interest themselves in the affairs of the state. So long as wealth flowed in as ever, and the traders from India and Persia saw no obstruction in the state of things to a safe transaction of their various businesses and transportation of their valuable commodities, the merchants left the state to take care of itself, and whatever opinions they held, expressed them only in their own circles, thinking but of accumulation by day, and of ostentatious expenditure by night. I have often heard, that their general voice, had it been raised, would have been hostile to the policy that has prevailed. But it was not raised; and now, when too late, and these mercenary and selfish beings are driven to some action by the loss of their accustomed gains, a large and violent party is forming among them, who loudly condemn the conduct of the Queen and her ministers, and advocate immediate submission to whatever terms Aurelian may impose. This party however, powerful though it may be through wealth, is weak in numbers. The people are opposed to them, and go enthusiastically with the Queen, and do not scruple to exult in the distresses of the merchants. Their present impotence is but a just retribution upon them for their criminal apathy during the early stages of the difficulty. Then had they taken a part as they ought to have done in the public deliberations, the rupture which has ensued might, it is quite likely, have been prevented. Their voice would have been a loud and

strong one, and would have been heard. They deserve to lose their liberties, who will not spare time from selfish pursuits to guard them. Where a government is popular, even to no greater extent than this, it behooves every individual, if he values the power delegated to him and would retain it, to use it, otherwise it is by degrees and insensibly lost; and once absorbed into the hands of the few, it is not easily, if at all, to be recovered.

Nothing can exceed the activity displayed on all hands in every preparation which the emergency demands. New levies of men are making, and a camp again forming to reinforce the Queen, at Emesa, or in its neighborhood, if she should not be compelled to retire upon Palmyra. In the mean time, we wait with beating hearts for the next arrival of couriers.

After an anxious suspense of several days all my worst apprehensions are realized. Messengers have arrived, announcing the defeat of Zenobia before the walls of Emesa, and with them fugitives from the conquered army are pouring in. Every hour now do we expect the approach of the Queen, with the remnant of her forces. Our intelligence is in the hand of Zenobia herself. She has written thus to her minister.

‘Septimia Zenobia to Dionysius Longinus. I am again defeated. Our cavalry were at first victorious, as before at Antioch. The Roman horse were routed. But the infantry of Aurelian, in number greatly superior to ours, falling upon our ranks when deprived of the support of the cavalry, obtained an easy victory; while their horse, rallying and increased by reinforcements

from Antioch, drove us in turn at all points, penetrating even to our camp, and completed the disaster of the day. I have now no power with which to cope with Aurelian. It remains but to retreat upon Palmyra, there placing our reliance upon the strength of our walls, and upon our Armenian, Saracen, and Persian allies. I do not despair, although the favor of the gods seems withdrawn. Farewell.'

The city is in the utmost consternation. All power seems paralysed. The citizens stand together in knots at the corners of the streets, like persons struck dumb, and without command of either their bodies or their minds. The first feeling was, and it was freely expressed, 'To contend further is hopeless. The army is destroyed; another cannot now be recruited; and if it could, before it were effected, Aurelian would be at the gates with his countless legions, and the city necessarily surrender. We must now make the best terms we can, and receive passively conditions which we can no longer oppose.'

But soon other sentiments took the place of these, and being urged by those who entertained them, with zeal, they have prevailed.

'Why,' they have urged, 'should we yield before that becomes the only alternative? At present we are secure within the walls of our city, which may well defy all the power of a besieging army. Those most skilled in such matters, and who have visited the places in the world deemed most impregnable, assert that the defences of Palmyra are perfect, and surpassed by none; and that any army, whether a Roman or any other, must perish before it would be possible either to

force our gates or reduce us by hunger. Besides, what could we expect by submitting to the conqueror, but national extinction? Our city would be pillaged; our principal citizens murdered; perhaps a general slaughter made of the inhabitants, without regard to age or sex. The mercies of Rome have ever been cruel; and Aurelian we know to be famed for the severity of his temper. No commander of modern times has instituted so terrible a discipline in his army, and Rome itself has felt the might of his iron hand; it is always on his sword. What can strangers, foreigners, enemies, and rebels, as he regards us, expect? And are the people of Palmyra ready to abandon their Queen? to whom we owe all this great prosperity, this wide renown, this extended empire? But for Zenobia we were now what we were so many ages, a petty trading village, a community of money-makers, hucksters and barterers, without arts, without science, without fame, destitute of all that adorns and elevates a people. Zenobia has raised us to empire; it is Zenobia who has made us the conquerors of Persia, and the rival of Rome. Shame to those who will desert her! Shame to those who will distrust a genius that has hitherto shone with greater lustre in proportion to the difficulties that have opposed it! Who can doubt that by lending her all our energies and means, she will yet triumph? Shame and death to the enemies of the Queen and the State!

Sentiments like these are now every where heard, and the courage and enthusiasm of the people are rising again. Those who are for war and resistance are always the popular party. There is an instinctive love of liberty and power, and a horror at the thought

of losing them, that come to the aid of the weak, and often cause them to resist, under circumstances absolutely desperate. Palmyra is not weak, but to one who contemplates both parties, and compares their relative strength, it is little short of madness to hope to hold out with ultimate success against the power of Rome. But such is the determination of the great body of the people. And the Queen, when she shall approach with her broken and diminished, and defeated army, will meet the welcome of a conqueror. Never before in the history of the world, was there so true-hearted a devotion of a whole people to the glory, interests, and happiness of One—and never was such devotion so deserved.

The Princess Julia possesses herself like one armed for such adversities, not by nature, but by reflection and philosophy. She was designed for scenes of calmness and peace: but she has made herself equal to times of difficulty, tumult and danger. She shrinks not from the duties which her station now imposes upon her; but seems like one who possesses resolution enough to reign with the vigor and power of Zenobia. Her two brothers, who have remained in the city, Herennianus and Timolaus, leave all affairs of state to her and the council; they preferring the base pleasures of sensuality, in which they wallow day and night in company with Antiochus and his crew. If a deep depression is sometimes seen to rest upon her spirit, it comes rather when she thinks of her mother, than of herself. She experiences already, through her lively sympathies, the grief that will rage in the soul of Zenobia, should fortune deprive her of her crown.

‘Zenobia,’ she has said to me, ‘Zenobia cannot descend from a throne, without suffering such as common souls cannot conceive. A goddess driven from heaven and the company of the gods could not endure more. To possess and to exercise power is to her heaven; to be despoiled of it, Tartarus and death. She was born for a throne, though not on one; and how she graces it, you and the world have seen. She will display fortitude under adversity and defeat, I am sure, and to the common eye, the same soul, vigorous with all its energies, will appear to preside over her. But the prospect or expectation of a fall from her high place will rack with torments such as no mortal can hope to assuage. To witness her grief, without the power to relieve—I cannot bear to think of it!’

In Livia there is more of the mother. She is proud, imperious, and ambitious, in a greater measure even than Zenobia. Young as she is, she believes herself of a different nature from others; she born to rule, others to serve. It is not the idea of her country and its renown that fills and sways her, but of a throne and its attendant glories. So she could reign a Queen, with a Queen’s state and homage, it would matter little to her whether it were in Persia or Palmyra. Yet with those who are her equals is she free, and even sportive, light of heart, and overflowing with excess of life. Her eye burns with the bright lustre of a star, and her step is that of the mistress of a world. She is not terrified at the prospect before her, for her confident and buoyant spirit looks down all opposition, and predicts a safe egress from the surrounding peril, and an

ascent, through this very calamity itself, to a position more illustrious still.

‘Julia,’ said she, on one occasion of late, while I sat a listener, ‘supposing that the people of Palmyra should set aside our renowned brothers, and again prefer a woman’s sway, would not you renounce your elder right in favor of me? I do not think you would care to be a Queen?’

‘That is true,’ replied Julia, ‘I should not care to be a Queen; and yet, I believe I should reign, that you might not. Though I covet not the exercise of power, I believe I should use it more wisely than you would, who do.’

‘I am sure,’ said Livia, ‘I feel within me that very superiority to others, which constitutes the royal character, and would fit me eminently to reign. He cannot be a proper slave who has not the soul of a slave. Neither can he reign well who has not the soul of a monarch. I am suited to a throne, just as others are by the providence of the gods suited to uphold the throne, and be the slaves of it.’

‘Were you Queen, Livia, it would be for your own sake; to enjoy the pleasures which as you imagine accompany that state, and exercise over others the powers with which you were clothed, and receive the homage of dependent subjects. Your own magnificence and luxurious state would be your principal thought. Is that being suited to a throne?’

‘But,’ said Livia, ‘I should not be guilty of intentional wrong toward any. So long as my people obeyed my laws and supported my government, there would be no causes of difficulty. But surely, if there

were resistance, and any either insulted or opposed my authority, it would be a proper occasion for violent measures. For there must be some to govern as well as others to obey. All cannot rule. Government is founded in necessity. Kings and queens are of nature's making. It would be right then to use utmost severity toward such as ceased to obey, as the slave his master. How could the master obtain the service of the slave, if there were not reposed in him power to punish? Shall the master of millions have less?

'Dear Livia, your principles are suited only to some Persian despotism. You very soberly imagine, unless you jest, that governments exist for the sake of those who govern—that kings and queens are the objects for which governments are instituted.'

'Truly, it is very much so. Otherwise what would the king or queen of an empire be but a poor official, maintained in a sort of state by the people, and paid by them for the discharge of a certain set of duties which must be performed by some one; but who possesses, in fact, no will nor power of his own; rather the servant of the people than their master?'

'I think,' replied Julia, 'you have given a very just definition of the imperial office. A king, queen, or emperor, is indeed the servant of the people. He exists not for his own pleasure or glory, but for their good. Else he is a tyrant, a despot—not a sovereign.'

'It is then,' said Livia, 'only a tyrant or a despot that I would consent to be. Not in any bad meaning of the terms; for you know, Julia, that I could not be cruel nor unjust. But unless I could reign, as one independent of my people, and irresponsible to them;

not in name only, but in reality above them ; receiving the homage due to the queenly character and office—I would not reign at all. To sit upon a throne, a mere painted puppet, shaken by the breath of every conceited or discontented citizen, a butt for every shaft to fly at, a mere hireling, a slave in a queen's robe, the mouth-piece for others to speak by and proclaim their laws, with no will nor power of my own—no, no ! It is not such that Zenobia is.'

'She is more than that indeed,' replied Julia ; 'she is in some sense a despot ; her will is sovereign in the state ; she is an absolute prince in fact ; but it is through the force of her own character and virtues, not by the consent and expressed allowance of her subjects. Her genius, her goodness, her justice, and her services, have united to confer upon her this dangerous pre-eminence. But who else, with power such as hers, would reign as she has reigned ? An absolute will, guided by perfect wisdom and goodness, constitutes I indeed believe the simplest and best form of human government. It is a copy of that of the universe, under the providence of the gods. But an absolute will, moved only or chiefly by the selfish love of regal state and homage, or by a very defective wisdom and goodness, is on the other hand the very worst form of human government. You would make an unequalled queen, Livia, if to act the queen were all ; if you were but to sit and receive the worship of the slaves, your subjects. As you sit now, I can almost believe you Queen of the East ! Juno's air was not more imperial, nor the beauty of Venus more enslaving.

Piso will not dissent from what I began with, or now end with.'

'I think you have delivered a true doctrine,' I replied ; 'but which few who have once tasted of power will admit. Liberty would be in great danger were Livia queen. Her subjects would be too willing to forget their rights, through a voluntary homage to her queenly character and state. Their chains would however be none the less chains, that they were voluntarily assumed. That indeed is the most dangerous slavery which men impose upon themselves, for it does not bear the name of slavery, but some other ; yet as it is real, the character of the slave is silently and unconsciously formed, and then unconsciously transmitted.'

'I perceive,' said Livia, 'if what you philosophers urge be true, that I am rather meant by nature for a Persian or a Roman throne than any other. I would be absolute, though it were over but a village. A divided and imperfect power I would not accept, though it were over the world. But the gods grant it long ere any one be called in Palmyra to fill the place of Zenobia !'

'Happy were it for mankind,' said Julia, 'could she live and reign forever.'

Thus do all differences cease and run into harmony at the name of Zenobia.

Every hour do we look for the arrival of the army.

As I sit writing at my open window, overlooking the street and spacious courts of the Temple of Justice,

I am conscious of an unusual disturbance—the people at a distance are running in one direction—the clamor approaches—and now I hear the cries of the multitude, ‘The Queen! the Queen!’

I fly to the walls.

I resume my pen. The alarm was a true one. Upon gaining the streets, I found the populace all pouring toward the Gate of the Desert, in which direction, it was affirmed, the Queen was making her approach. Upon reaching it, and ascending one of its lofty towers, I beheld from the verge of the horizon to within a mile of the walls, the whole plain filled with the scattered forces of Zenobia, a cloud of dust resting over the whole, and marking out the extent of ground they covered. As the advanced detachments drew near, how different a spectacle did they present from that bright morning, when glittering in steel, and full of the fire of expected victory, they proudly took their way toward the places from which they now were returning, a conquered, spoiled, and dispirited remnant, covered with the dust of a long march, and wearily dragging their limbs beneath the rays of a burning sun. Yet was there order and military discipline preserved, even under circumstances so depressing, and which usually are an excuse for their total relaxation. It was the silent, dismal march of a funeral train, rather than the hurried flight of a routed and discomfited army. There was the stiff and formal military array, but the life and spirit of an elated and proud soldiery were gone. They moved with method to the sound of clanging instruments, and the long, shrill blast of the trumpet,

but they moved as mourners. They seemed as if they came to bury their Queen.

Yet the scene changed to a brighter aspect, as the army drew nearer and nearer to the walls, and the city throwing open her gates, the populace burst forth, and with loud and prolonged shouts, welcomed them home. These shouts sent new life into the hearts of the desponding ranks, and with brightened faces and a changed air they waved their arms and banners, and returned shout for shout. As they passed through the gates to the ample quarters provided within the walls, a thousand phrases of hearty greeting were showered down upon them, from those who lined the walls, the towers, and the way-side, which seemed, from the effects produced in those on whom they fell, a more quickening restorative than could have been any medicine or food that had ministered only to the body.

The impatience of the multitude to behold and receive the Queen was hardly to be restrained from breaking forth in some violent way. They were ready to rush upon the great avenue, bearing aside the troops, that they might the sooner greet her. When, at length, the centre of the army approached, and the armed chariot appeared in which Zenobia sat, the enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. They broke through all restraint, and with cries that filled the heavens, pressed toward her—the soldiers catching the frenzy and joining them—and quickly detaching the horses from her carriage, themselves drew her into the city just as if she had returned victor with Aurelian in her train. There was no language of devotion and loyalty that did not meet her ear, nor any sign of affection that

could be made from any distance, from the plains, the walls, the gates, the higher buildings of the city, the roofs of which were thronged, that did not meet her eye. It was a testimony of love so spontaneous and universal, a demonstration of confidence and unshaken attachment so hearty and sincere, that Zenobia was more than moved by it, she was subdued—and she who, by her people, had never before been seen to weep, bent her head and buried her face in her hands.

With what an agony of expectation, while this scene was passing, did I await the appearance of Fausta, and Gracchus, and Calpurnius—if, indeed, I were destined ever to see them again. I waited long, and with pain, but the gods be praised, not in vain, nor to meet with disappointment only. Not far in the rear of Zenobia, at the head of a squadron of cavalry, rode, as my eye distinctly informed me, those whom I sought. No sooner did they in turn approach the gates, than almost the same welcome that had been lavished upon Zenobia, was repeated for Fausta, Gracchus, and Calpurnius. The names of Calpurnius and Fausta—of Calpurnius, as he who had saved the army at Antioch, of Fausta as the intrepid and fast friend of the Queen, were especially heard from a thousand lips, joined with every title of honor. My voice was not wanting in the loud acclaim. It reached the ears of Fausta, who, starting and looking upward, caught my eye just as she passed beneath the arch of the vast gateway. I then descended from my tower of observation, and joined the crowds who thronged the close ranks, as they filed along the streets of the city. I pressed upon the steps of my friends, never being able to keep my eyes from the

forms of those I loved so well, whom I had so feared to lose, and so rejoiced to behold returned alive and unhurt.

All day the army has continued pouring into the city, and beside the army greater crowds still of the inhabitants of the suburbs, who, knowing that before another day shall end, the Romans may encamp before the walls, are scattering in all directions—multitudes taking refuge in the city, but greater numbers still, mounted upon elephants, camels, dromedaries and horses, flying into the country to the north. The whole region as far as the eye can reach, seems in commotion, as if society were dissolved, and breaking up from its foundations. The noble and the rich, whose means are ample, gather together their valuables, and with their children and friends seek the nearest parts of Mesopotamia, where they will remain in safety till the siege shall be raised. The poor, and such as cannot reach the Euphrates, flock into the city, bringing with them what little of provisions or money they may possess, and are quartered upon the inhabitants, or take up a temporary abode in the open squares, or in the courts and porticos of palaces and temples—the softness and serenity of the climate rendering even so much as the shelter of a tent superfluous. But by this vast influx the population of the city cannot be less than doubled, and I should tremble for the means of subsistence for so large a multitude, did I not know the inexhaustible magazines of grain, laid up by the prudent foresight of the Queen, in anticipation of the possible occurrence of the emergency which has now arrived. A long time—longer than he himself would be able to

subsist his army—must Aurelian lie before Palmyra ere he can hope to reduce it by famine. What impression his engines may be able to make upon the walls, remains to be seen. Periander pronounces the city impregnable. My own judgment, formed upon a comparison of it with the cities most famous in the world for the strength of their defences, would agree with his.

Following on in the wake of the squadron to which Fausta was attached, I wished to reach the camp at the same time with herself and Gracchus and my brother, but owing to the press in the streets, arising from the causes just specified, I was soon separated from, and lost sight of it. Desirous however to meet them, I urged my way along with much labor till I reached the quarter of the city assigned to the troops, where I found the tents and the open ground already occupied. I sought in vain for Fausta. While I waited, hoping still to see her, I stood leaning upon a pile of shields, which the soldiers, throwing off their arms, had just made, and watching them as they were, some disencumbering themselves of their armor, others unclasping the harness of their horses, others arranging their weapons into regular forms, and others, having gone through their first tasks, were stretching themselves at rest beneath the shadow of their tents, or of some branching tree. Near me sat a soldier, who, apparently too fatigued to rid himself of his heavy armor, had thrown himself upon the ground, and was just taking off his helmet, and wiping the dust and sweat from his face, while a little boy, observing his wants, ran to a neighboring fountain, and filling a vessel with water,

returned and held it to him, saying, 'Drink, soldier; this will make you stronger than your armor.'

'You little traitor,' said the soldier, 'art not ashamed to bring drink to me, who have helped to betray the city? Beware,—or a sharp sword will cut you in two.'

'I thought,' replied the child, nothing daunted, 'that you were a soldier of Palmyra, who had been to fight the Romans. But whoever you may be, I am sure you need the water.'

'But,' rejoined the soldier, swallowing at long draughts as if it had been nectar, the cooling drink, 'do I deserve water, or any of these cowards here, who have been beaten by the Romans, and so broken the heart of our good Queen, and possibly lost her her throne? Answer me that.'

'You have done what you could, I know,' replied the boy, 'because you are a Palmyrene, and who can do more? I carry round the streets of the city in this palm-leaf basket, date cakes, which I sell to those who love them. But does my mother blame me because I do not always come home with an empty basket? I sell what I can. Should I be punished for doing what I cannot?'

'Get you gone, you rogue,' replied the soldier; 'you talk like a Christian boy, and they have a new way of returning good for evil. But here, if you have cakes in your basket, give me one and I will give you a penny all the way from Antioch. See! there is the head of Aurelian on it. Take care he don't eat you up—or at least your cakes. But hark you, little boy, do you see yonder that old man with a bald head, leaning against his shield? go to him with your cakes.'

The boy ran off.

'Friend,' said I, addressing him, 'your march has not lost you your spirits; you can jest yet.'

'Truly I can. If the power to do that were gone, then were all lost. A good jest in a time of misfortune is food and drink. It is strength to the arm, digestion to the stomach, courage to the heart. It is better than wisdom or wine. A prosperous man may afford to be melancholy, but if the miserable are so, they are worse than dead—but it is sure to kill them. Near me I had a comrade whose wit it was alone that kept life in me upon the desert. All the way from Emesa, had it not been for the tears of laughter, those of sorrow and shame would have killed me.'

'But in the words of the little cake urchin, you did what you could. The fates were opposed to you.'

'If all had done as much and as well as some, we would have had the fates in our own keeping. Had it not been for that artifice of the Romans at Antioch, we had now been rather in Rome than here, and it was a woman—or girl rather, as I am told—the daughter of Gracchus, who first detected the cheat, and strove to save the army, but it was too late.'

'Were you near her?'

'Was I not? Not the great Zabdas himself put more mettle into the troops than did that fiery spirit and her black horse. And beyond a doubt, she would have perished through an insane daring, had not the Queen in time called her from the field, and afterward kept her within her sight and reach. Her companion, a Roman turned Palmyrene as I heard, was like one palsied when she was gone, till when, he had been the very Mars of the field. As it was, he was the true

hero of the day. He brought to my mind Odenatus. 'T was so he looked that day we entered Ctesiphon. I could wish, and hope too, that he might share the throne of Zenobia, but that all the world knows what a man-hater she is. But were you not there?'

'No. It could not be. I remained in the city.'

'Ten thousand more of such men as you—and we would not have fallen back upon Emesa, nor left Antioch without the head of Aurelian. But alas for it, the men of Palmyra are men of silk, and love their pleasures too well to be free. I should call them women, but for Zenobia and the daughter of Gracchus.'

'Do not take me for one of them. I am a Roman—and could not fight against my country.'

'A Roman! and what makes you here? Suppose I were to run you through with this spear?'

'Give me another and you are welcome to try.'

'Am I so? Then will I not do it. Give a man his will and he no longer cares for it. Besides, having escaped with hazard from the clutches of one Roman, I will not encounter another. Dost thou know that demon Aurelian? Half who fell, fell by his hand. His sword made no more of a man in steel armor, than mine would of a naked slave. Many a tall Palmyrene did he split to the saddle, falling both ways. The ranks broke and fled wherever he appeared. Death could not keep pace with him. The Roman Piso—of our side—sought him over the field, to try his fortune with him, but the gods protected him, and he found him not: otherwise his body were now food for hyenas. No arm of mortal mould can cope with his. Mine is not despicable: there is not its match in Pal-

myra : but I would not encounter Aurelian unless I were in love with death.'

'It is as you say, I well know. He is reputed in our army to have killed more with his single arm in battle, than any known in Roman history. Our camp resounds with songs which celebrate his deeds of blood. His slain are counted by thousands, nothing less.'

'The gods blast him, ere he be seen before the walls of Palmyra ; our chance were better against double the number of legions under another general. The general makes the soldier. The Roman infantry are so many Aurelians. Yet to-morrow's sun will see him here. I am free to say, I tremble for Palmyra. A war ill begun, will, if auguries are aught, end worse. Last night the sky was full of angry flashes, both white and red. While the army slept over-wrought upon the desert, and the silence of death was around, the watches heard sounds as of the raging of a battle, distinct and clear, dying away in groans as of a host perishing under the sword and battle-axe. These horrid sounds at length settled over the sleeping men, till it seemed as if they proceeded from them. The sentinels—at first struck dumb with terror and amazement—called out to one another to know what it should mean, but they could only confirm to each other what had been heard, and together ask the protection of the gods. But what strikes deeper yet, is what you have heard, that the Queen's far-famed Numidian, just as we came in sight of the walls of the city, stumbled, and where he stumbled, fell and died. What these things forebode, if not disaster and ruin, 't is hard to say. I need no one to read them to me.'

Saying thus, he rose and began to divest himself of the remainder of his heavy armor, saying, as he did it —‘It was this heavy armor that lost us the day at Antioch—lighter, and we could have escaped the meshes. Now let me lie and sleep.’

Returning, hardly had I arrived at the house of Gracchus, when it was announced in loud shouts by the slaves of the palace, that Gracchus himself, Fausta and Calpurnius were approaching. I hastened to the portico overlooking the court-yard, and was there just in season to assist Fausta to dismount. It was a joyful moment I need scarce assure you. Fausta returns wholly unhurt. Gracchus is wounded upon his left, and Calpurnius upon his right arm—but will not long suffer from the injury.

It was an unspeakable joy, once more to hear the cheerful voice of Gracchus resounding in the walls of his own dwelling, and to see Fausta, eased of her unnatural load of iron, again moving in her accustomed sphere in that graceful costume, partly Roman and partly Persian, and which now hides and now betrays the form, so as to reveal its beauty in the most perfect manner. A deep sadness, deeper than ever, sits upon her countenance, whenever her own thoughts occupy her. But surrounded by her friends, her native spirit, too elastic to be subdued, breaks forth, and she seems her former self again.

Our evening meal was sad, but not silent.

Gracchus instructed me, by giving a minute narrative of the march to Antioch—of the two battles—and the retreat. Calpurnius related with equal exactness the part which he took, and the services which Fausta,

by her penetrating observation, had been able to render to the army. They united in bestowing the highest encomiums upon Zenobia, who herself planned the battle, and disposed the forces, and with such consummate judgment, that Zabdas himself found nothing to disapprove or alter.

‘The day was clearly ours,’ said Fausta, ‘but for the artifice of Aurelian—allowable, I know, by all the rules of war—by which we were led on blindfold to our ruin. But flushed as we were by the early and complete success of the day, is it to be severely condemned that our brave men followed up their advantages with too much confidence, and broke from that close order, in which till then, they had fought; and by doing so, lost the command of themselves and their own strength? O, the dulness of our spirits, that we did not sooner detect the rank insincerity of that sudden, unexpected retreat of the Roman horse!’

‘The gods rather be praised,’ said Gracchus, ‘that your watchful eye detected so soon, what was too well concerted and acted to be perceived at all, and that as the fruit of it we sit here alive, and Zenobia holds her throne, and so many of our brave soldiers are now locked in sleep beneath their quiet tents.’

‘That, I think,’ said Calpurnius, ‘is rather the sentiment that should possess us. You will hardly believe, Lucius, that it was owing to the military genius of your ancient playmate, that we escaped the certain destruction that had been prepared for us?’

‘I can believe any thing good in that quarter, and upon slighter testimony. I have already heard from the lips of a soldier of your legion, that which you have

now related. Part of the praise was by him bestowed upon one Piso, a Roman turned Palmyrene as he termed him, who, he reported, fought at the side of the daughter of Gracchus.'

'He could not have said too much of that same Piso,' said Gracchus. 'Palmyra owes him a large debt of gratitude, which I am sure she will not be slow to pay. But let us think rather of the future than of the past, which, however we may have conducted, speaks only of disaster.'

I thank you for your assurances concerning Laco and Cœlia. Your conscience will never reproach you for this lenity.

LETTER XIV.

THE last days of this so lately favored empire draw near—at least such is my judgment. After a brief day of glory, its light will set in a long night of utter darkness and ruin.

Close upon the rear guard of the Queen's forces followed the light troops of Aurelian, and early this morning it was proclaimed that the armies of Rome were in sight, and fast approaching the city. These armies were considered too numerous to hazard another battle, therefore the gates were shut, and we are now beleaguered by a power too mighty to contend with, and which the Arabs, the climate, and want, must be trusted to subdue. The circumjacent plains are filled with the legions of Rome. Exhausted by the march across the desert, they have but pitched their tents, and now repose.

The Queen displays more than ever her accustomed activity and energy. She examines in person every part of the vast extent of wall, and every engine planted upon them for their defence. By her frequent presence in every part of the city she inspires her soldiers with the same spirit which possesses herself; and for herself, to behold her careering through the streets of the city, reviewing, and often addressing, the different divisions of the army, and issuing her commands, she seems rather like one who is now Queen of the East, and is soon to be of the world, than one whose dominion is already narrowed down to the compass of a single city,

and may shortly be deprived even of that. The lofty dignity of her air has assumed a more imposing greatness still. The imperial magnificence of her state is noways diminished, but rather increased, so that by a sort of delusion of the senses, she seems more a Queen than ever. By her native vigor and goodness, and by the addition of a most consummate art, by which she manages as she will a people whom she perfectly comprehends, she is at this moment more deeply intrenched within the affections of her subjects, and more completely the object of their idolatrous homage than ever before. Yet in her secret soul there is a deep depression, and a loss of confidence in her cause, which amounts not yet to a loss of hope, but approaches it. This is seen by those who can observe her in her more quiet hours, when the glare of public action and station is off, and her mind is left to its own workings. But, like those who play at dice, she has staked all—her kingdom, her crown—her life perhaps—upon a single throw, and having wound herself up to the desperate act, all the entreaty or argument of the whole earth could not move her to unclasp the hand that wields the fatal box. She will abide the throw.

There are still those who use both intreaty and argument to persuade her even at this late hour to make the best terms she may with Rome. Otho, though perfectly loyal and true, ceases not to press upon her, both in public and in private, those considerations which may have any weight with her to induce a change of measures. But it has thus far been to no purpose. Others there are who, as the danger

increases, become more and more restless, and scruple not to let their voice be heard in loud complaint and discontent, but they are too few in proportion to the whole, to make them objects of apprehension. It will however be strange if, as the siege is prolonged, they do not receive such accessions of strength as to render them dangerous.

The Emperor has commenced his attacks upon the city in a manner that shows him unacquainted with its strength. The battle has raged fiercely all day, with great loss we infer to the Romans, with none we know to the Palmyrenes.

Early on the morning of the second day it was evident that a general assault was to be made. The Roman army completely surrounded the city, at the same signal approached, and under cover of their shields, attempted both to undermine and scale the walls. But their attempts were met with such vigor, and with such advantage of action by the besieged, that although repeated many times during the day, they have resulted in only loss and death to the assailants. It is incredible the variety and ingenuity of the contrivances by which the Queen's forces beat off and rendered ineffectual all the successive movements of the enemy, in their attempts to surmount the walls. Not only from every part of them were showers of arrows discharged from the bows of experienced archers, but from engines also, by which they were driven to a much greater distance, and with great increase of force.

This soon rendered every attack of this nature use-

less and worse, and their efforts were then concentrated upon the several gates, which simultaneously were attempted to be broken in, fired, or undermined. But here again, as often as these attempts were renewed, were they defeated, and great destruction made of those engaged in them. The troops approached as is usual, covered completely, or buried rather, beneath their shields. They were suffered to form directly under the walls, and actually commence their work of destruction, when suddenly from the towers of the gates, and through channels constructed for the purpose in every part of the masonry, torrents of liquid fire were poured upon the iron roof, beneath which the soldiers worked. This at first they endured. The melted substances ran off from the polished surface of the shields, and the stones which were dashed upon them from engines, after rattling and bounding over their heads, rolled harmless to the ground. But there was in reserve a foe which they could not encounter. When it was found that the fiery streams flowed down the slanting sides of the shell, penetrating scarcely at all through the crevices of the well-joined shields, it was suggested by the ingenious Periander, that there should first be thrown down a quantity of pitch in a half melted state, by which the whole surface of the roof should be completely covered, and which should then, by a fresh discharge of fire, be set in a blaze, the effect of which must be to heat the shields to such a degree, that they could neither be held, nor the heat beneath endured by the miners. This was immediately resorted to at all the gates, and the success was complete. For no sooner was the cold pitch set on

fire and constantly fed by fresh quantities from above, than the heat became insupportable to those below, who suddenly letting go their hold, and breaking away from their compacted form, in hope to escape from the stifling heat, the burning substance then poured in upon them, and vast numbers perished miserably upon the spot, or ran burning, and howling with pain, toward the camp. The slaughter made was very great, and terrible to behold.

Nevertheless, the next day the same attempts were renewed, in the hope, we supposed, that the Queen's missiles might be expended, but were defeated again in the same manner and with like success.

These things being so, and Aurelian being apparently convinced that the city cannot be taken by storm, the enemy are now employed in surrounding it with a double ditch and rampart, as defences both against us and our allies, between which the army is to be safely encamped; an immense labor, to which I believe a Roman army is alone competent. While this has been doing, the Palmyrenes have made frequent sallies from the gates, greatly interrupting the progress of the work, and inflicting severe losses. These attacks have usually been made at night, when the soldiers have been wearied by the exhausting toil of the day, and only a small proportion of the whole have been in a condition to ward off the blows.

The Roman works are at length completed. Every lofty palm tree, every cedar, every terebinth, has disappeared from the surrounding plains, to be converted into battering rams, or wrought into immense towers,

planted upon wheels, by which the walls are to be approached and surmounted. Houses and palaces have been demolished, that the ready hewed timber might be detached and applied to various warlike purposes. The once beautiful environs already begin to put on the appearance of desolation and ruin.

The citizens have awaited these preparations with watchful anxiety. The Queen has expressed every where and to all her conviction that all these vast and various preparations are futile—that the bravery of her soldiers, and the completeness of her counter provisions, will be sufficient for the protection and deliverance of the city.

Another day of fierce and bloody war. At four different points have the vast towers been pushed to the walls, filled with soldiers, and defended against the fires of the besieged by a casing of skins, and every incombustible substance, and provided with a store of water to quench whatever part might by chance kindle. It was fearful to behold these huge structures urged along by a concealed force, partly of men and partly of animals, and drawing nigh the walls. If they should once approach so near that they could be fastened to the walls, and so made secure, then could the enemy pour their legions upon the ramparts, and the battle would be transferred to the city itself. But in this case, as in the assaults upon the gates, the fire of the besieged has proved irresistible.

It was the direction of Periander, to whose unequalled sagacity this part of the defence was entrusted, that so soon as the towers should approach within reach of the most powerful engines, they should be

fired, if possible, by means of well-barbed arrows and javelins, to which were attached sacs and balls of inflammable and explosive substances. These fastening themselves upon every part of the tower could not fail to set fire to them while yet at some distance, and in extinguishing which the water and other means provided for that purpose would be nearly or quite exhausted, before they had reached the walls. Then as they came within easier reach, the engines were to belch forth those rivers of oil, fire, and burning pitch, which he was sure no structure, unless of solid iron, could withstand.

These directions were carefully observed, and their success at every point such as Periander had predicted. At the Gate of the Desert the most formidable preparations were made, under the inspection of the Emperor himself, who, at a distance, could plainly be discerned directing the work and encouraging the soldiers. Two towers of enormous size were here constructed, and driven toward the walls. Upon both, as they came within the play of the engines, were showered the fiery javelins and arrows, which it required all the activity of the occupants to ward off, or extinguish where they had succeeded in fastening themselves. One was soon in flames. The other, owing either to its being of a better construction, or to a less vigorous discharge of fire on the part of the defenders of the wall, not only escaped the more distant storm of blazing missiles, but succeeded in quenching the floods of burning pitch and oil, which, as it drew nearer and nearer, were poured upon it in fiery streams. On it moved, propelled by its invisible and protected power, and had now reached

the wall; the bridge was in the very act of being thrown and grappled to the ramparts; Aurelian was seen pressing forward the legions, who, as soon as it should be fastened, were to pour up its flights of steps and out upon the walls; when, to the horror of all, not less of the besiegers than of the besieged, its foundations upon one side—being laid over the moat—suddenly gave way, and the towering and enormous mass, with all its living burden, fell thundering to the plain. A shout, as of a delivered and conquering army, went up from the walls, while upon the legions below, such as had not been crushed by the tumbling ruin, and who endeavored to save themselves by flight, a sudden storm of stones, rocks, burning pitch, and missiles of a thousand kinds was directed, that left few to escape to tell the tale of death to their comrades. Aurelian, in his fury, or his desire to aid the fallen, approaching too near the walls, was himself struck by a well-directed shaft, wounded, and borne from the field.

At the other gates, where similar assaults had been made, the same success attended the Palmyrenes. The towers were in each instance set on fire and destroyed.

The city has greatly exulted at the issue of these repeated contests. Every sound and sign of triumph has been made upon the walls. Banners have been waved to and fro, trumpets have been blown, and in bold defiance of their power, parties of horse have sallied out from the gates, and after careering in sight of the enemy, have returned again within the walls. The enemy are evidently dispirited, and already weary of the work they have undertaken.

The Queen and her ministers are confident of suc-

cess, so far as active resistance of the attacks upon the walls is concerned—and perhaps with reason. For not even the walls of Rome, as they are now re-building, can be of greater strength than these; and never were the defences of a besieged city so complete at all points. But with equal reason are they despondent in the prospect of Aurelian's reducing them by want. If he shall succeed in procuring supplies for his army, and if he shall defeat the allies of the Queen, who are now every day looked for, captivity and ruin are sure. But the Queen and the citizens entertain themselves with the hope, that Aurelian's fiery temper will never endure the slow and almost disgraceful process of starving them into a surrender, and that finding his army constantly diminishing through the effects of such extraordinary exertions in a climate like this, he will at length propose such terms as they without dishonor can accept.

Many days have passed in inactivity on both sides; except that nothing can exceed the strictness with which all approaches to the city are watched, and the possibility of supplies reaching it cut off.

That which has been expected has come to pass. The Emperor has offered terms of surrender to the Queen; but such terms, and so expressed, that their acceptance was not so much as debated. The Queen was in council with her advisers, when it was announced that a herald from the Roman camp was seen approaching the walls. The gates were ordered to be opened, and the messenger admitted. He was con-

ducted to the presence of the Queen, surrounded by her ministers.

‘I come,’ said he, as he advanced toward Zenobia, ‘bearing a letter from the Emperor of Rome to the Queen of Palmyra. Here it is.’

‘I receive it gladly,’ replied the Queen, ‘and hope that it may open a way to an honorable composition of the difficulties which now divide us. Nichomachus, break the seals and read its contents.’

The secretary took the epistle from the hands of the herald, and opening, read that which follows :

‘Aurelian, Emperor of Rome and Conqueror of the East, to Zenobia and her companions in arms.

‘You ought of your own accord long since to have done, what now by this letter I enjoin and command. And what I now enjoin and command is this, an immediate surrender of the city ; but with assurance of life to yourself and your friends ; you, O Queen, with your friends, to pass your days where the senate, in its sovereign will, shall please to appoint. The rights of every citizen shall be respected, upon condition that all precious stones, silver, gold, silk, horses and camels be delivered into the hands of the Romans.’

As the secretary finished these words the Queen broke forth,—

‘What think you, good friends?’—her mounting color and curled lip showing the storm that raged within—‘What think you ? Is it a man or a god who has written thus ? Can it be a mortal who speaks in such terms to another ? By the soul of Odenatus, but

I think it must be the God of War himself. Slave, what sayest thou ?'

'I am but the chosen bearer,' the herald replied, 'of what I took from the hands of the Emperor. But between him and the god just named there is, as I deem, but small difference.'

'That's well said,' replied the Queen; 'there's something of the old Roman in thee. Friends,' she continued, turning to her counsellors, 'what answer shall we send to this lordly command? What is your advice?'

'Mine is,' said Zabdas, 'that the Queen set her foot upon the accursed scroll, and that yonder wretch that bore it be pitched headlong from the highest tower upon the walls, and let the wind from his rotting carcass bear back our only answer.'

'Nay, nay, brave Zabdas,' said the Queen, the fury of her general having the effect to restore her own self-possession, 'thou wouldst not counsel so. War then doubles its wo and guilt, when cruelty and injustice bear sway. Otho, what sayest thou?'

'Answer it in its own vein! You smile, Queen, as if incredulous. But I repeat—answer it in its own vein! I confess an inward disappointment and an inward change. I hoped much from terms which a wise man might at this point propose, and soil neither his own nor his country's honor. But Aurelian—I now see—is not such a one. He is but the spoiled child of fortune. He has grown too quickly great to grow well. Wisdom has had no time to ripen.'

Others concurring, Zenobia seized a pen and wrote that which I transcribe.

‘Zenobia, Queen of the East, to Aurelian Augustus.

‘No one before you ever thought to make a letter serve instead of a battle. But let me tell you, whatever is won in war, is won by bravery, not by letters. You ask me to surrender—as if ignorant that Cleopatra chose rather to die, than, surrendering, to live in the enjoyment of every honor. Our Persian allies will not fail me. I look for them every hour. The Saracens are with me—the Armenians are with me. The Syrian robbers have already done you no little damage. What then can you expect, when these allied armies are upon you? You will lay aside I think a little of that presumption with which you now command me to surrender, as if you were already conqueror of the whole world.’

The letter being written and approved by those who were present, it was placed by Nichomachus in the hands of the herald.

No one can marvel, my Curtius, that a letter in the terms of Aurelian’s should be rejected, nor that it should provoke such an answer as Zenobia’s. It has served merely to exasperate passions which were already enough excited. It was entirely in the power of the Emperor to have terminated the contest, by the proposal of conditions which Palmyra would have gladly accepted, and by which Rome would have been more profited and honored than it can be by the reduction and ruin of a city and kingdom like this. But it is too true, that Aurelian is rather a soldier than an Emperor. A

victory got by blood is sweeter far to him, I fear, than tenfold wider conquests won by peaceful negotiations.

The effect of the taunting and scornful answer of the Queen has been immediately visible in the increased activity and stir in the camp of Aurelian. Preparations are going on for renewed assaults upon the walls upon a much larger scale than before.

On the evening of the day on which the letter of Aurelian was received and answered, I resorted, according to my custom during the siege, to a part of the walls not far from the house of Gracchus, whence an extended view is had of the Roman works and camp. Fausta, as often before, accompanied me. She delights thus at the close of these weary, melancholy days, to walk forth, breathe the reviving air, observe the condition of the city, and from the towers upon the walls, watch the movements and labors of the enemy. The night was without moon or stars. Low and heavy clouds hung, but did not move, over our heads. The air was still, nay, rather dead, so deep was its repose.

‘How oppressive is this gloom,’ said Fausta, as we came forth upon the ramparts, and took our seat where the eye could wander unobstructed over the plain, ‘and yet how gaily illuminated is this darkness by yonder belt of moving lights. It seems like the gorgeous preparation for a funeral. Above us and behind it is silent and dark. These show like the torches of the approaching mourners. The gods grant there be no omen in this.’

‘I know not,’ I replied. ‘It may be so. To-day has, I confess it, destroyed the last hope in my mind

that there might come a happy termination to this unwise and unnecessary contest. It can end now only in the utter defeat and ruin of one of the parties—and which that shall be I cannot doubt. Listen, Fausta, to the confused murmur that comes from the camp of the Roman army, bearing witness to its numbers; and to these sounds of the hammer, the axe, and the saw, plied by ten thousand arms, bearing witness to the activity and exhaustless resources of the enemy, and you cannot but feel, that at last—it may be long first—but that at last, Palmyra must give way. From what has been observed to-day, there is not a doubt that Aurelian has provided, by means of regular caravans to Antioch, for a constant supply of whatever his army requires. Reinforcements too, both of horse and foot, are seen daily arriving, in such numbers as more than to make good those who have been lost under the walls, or by the excessive heats of the climate.'

'I hear so,' said Fausta, 'but I will not despair. If I have one absorbing love, it is for Palmyra. It is the land of my birth, of my affections. I cannot tell you with what pride I have watched its growth, and its daily advancement in arts and letters, and have dwelt in fancy upon that future, when it should rival Rome, and surpass the traditionary glories of Babylon and Nineveh. O Lucius! to see now a black pall descending—these swollen clouds are an emblem of it—and settling upon the prospect and veiling it forever in death and ruin—I cannot believe it. It cannot have come to this. It is treason to give way to such fears. Where Zenobia is, final ruin cannot come.'

'It ought not, I wish it could not,' I replied, 'but

my fears are that it will, and my fears now are convictions. Where now, my dear Fausta, are the so certainly expected reliefs from Armenia, from Persia?—Fausta, Palmyra must fall.'

'Lucius Piso, Palmyra shall not fall—I say it—and every Palmyrene says it—and what all say, is decreed. If we are true in our loyalty and zeal, the Romans will be wearied out. Lucius, could I but reach the tent of Aurelian, my single arm should rid Palmyra of her foe, and achieve her freedom.'

'No, Fausta, you could not do it.'

'Indeed I would and could. I would consent to draw infamy upon my head as a woman, if by putting off my sex and my nature too, I could by such an act give life to a dying nation, and what is as much, preserve Zenobia her throne.'

'Think not in that vein, Fausta. I would not that your mind should be injured even by the thought.'

'I do not feel it to be an injury,' she rejoined; 'it would be a sacrifice for my country, and the dearer, in that I should lose my good name in making it. I should be sure of one thing, that I should do it in no respect for my own glory. But let us talk no more of it. I often end, Lucius, when thinking of our calamities, and of a fatal termination of these contests to us, with dwelling upon one bright vision. Misfortune to us will bring you nearer to Julia.'

'The gods forbid that my happiness should be bought at such a price!'

'It will only come as an accidental consequence, and cannot disturb you. If Palmyra falls, the pride of Zenobia will no longer separate you.'

‘But,’ I replied, ‘the prospect is not all so bright. Captive princes are by the usages of Rome often sacrificed, and Aurelian, if sometimes generous, is often cruel. Fears would possess me in the event of a capitulation or conquest, which I cannot endure to entertain.’

‘O Lucius, you rate Aurelian too low, if you believe he could revenge himself upon a woman—and such a woman as Zenobia. I cannot believe it possible. No. If Palmyra falls it will give you Julia, and it will be some consolation even in the fall of a kingdom, that it brings happiness to two, whom friendship binds closer to me than any others.’

As Fausta said these words, we became conscious of the presence of a person at no great distance from us, leaning against the parapet of the wall, the upper part of the form just discernible.

‘Who stands yonder?’ said Fausta. ‘It has not the form of a sentinel; besides, the sentinel paces by us to and fro without pausing. It may be Calpurnius, His legion is in this quarter. Let us move toward him.’

‘No. He moves himself and comes toward us. How dark the night! I can make nothing of the form.’

The figure passed us, and unchallenged by the sentinel whom it met. After a brief absence it returned, and stopping as it came before us—

‘Fausta!’ said a voice—once heard, not to be mistaken.

‘Zenobia!’ said Fausta, and forgetting dignity, embraced her as a friend,

‘What makes you here?’ inquired Fausta;—‘are there none in Palmyra to do your bidding, but you must be abroad at such an hour and such a place?’

‘’T is not so fearful quite,’ replied the Queen, ‘as a battle-field, and there you trust me.’

‘Never, willingly.’

‘Then you do not love my honor?’ said the Queen, taking Fausta’s hand as she spoke.

‘I love your safety better—no—no—what have I said—not better than your honor—and yet to what end is honor, if we lose the life in which it resides? I sometimes think we purchase human glory too dearly, at the sacrifice of quiet, peace, and security.’

‘But you do not think so long. What is a life of indulgence and sloth? Life is worthy only in what it achieves. Should I have done better to have sat over my embroidery, in the midst of my slaves, all my days, than to have spent them in building up a kingdom?’

‘O no—no—you have done right. Slaves can embroider: Zenobia cannot. This hand was made for other weapon than the needle.’

‘I am weary,’ said the Queen; ‘let us sit;’—and saying so, she placed herself upon the low stone block, upon which we had been sitting, and drawing Fausta near her, she threw her left arm round her, retaining the hand she held clasped in her own.

‘I am weary,’ she continued, ‘for I have walked nearly the circuit of the walls. You asked what makes me here. No night passes but I visit these towers and battlements. If the governor of the ship sleeps, the men at the watch sleep. Besides, I love Palmyra too well to sleep while others wait and watch. I

would do my share. How beautiful is this!—the city girded by these strange fires! its ears filled with this busy music! Piso, it seems hard to believe an enemy, and such an enemy, is there, and that these sights and sounds are all of death!’

‘Would it were not so, noble Queen! Would it were not yet too late to move in the cause of peace. If even at the risk of life I—’

‘Forbear, Piso,’ quickly rejoined the Queen; ‘it is to no purpose. You have my thanks, but your Emperor has closed the door of peace forever. It is now war unto death. He may prove victor: it is quite possible: but I draw not back—no word of supplication goes from me. And every citizen of Palmyra, save a few sottish souls, is with me. It were worth my throne and my life, the bare suggestion of an embassy now to Aurelian. But let us not speak of this, but of things more agreeable. The day for trouble, the night for rest. Fausta, where is the quarter of Calpurnius? methinks it is hereabouts.’

‘It is,’ replied Fausta, ‘just beyond the towers of the gate next to us; were it not for this thick night, we could see where at this time he is usually to be found, doing, like yourself, an unnecessary task.’

‘He is a good soldier and a faithful—may he prove as true to you, my noble girl, as he has to me. Albeit I am myself a sceptic in love, I cannot but be made happier when I see hearts worthy of each other united by that bond. I trust that bright days are coming, when I may do you the honor I would. Piso, I am largely a debtor to your brother—and Palmyra as much. Singular fortune! that while Rome thus oppresses me,

to Romans I should owe so much ; to one twice my life, to another my army. But where, Lucius Piso, was your heart, that it fell not into the snare that caught Calpurnius ?

‘My heart,’ I replied, ‘has always been Fausta’s, from childhood—’

‘Our attachment,’ said Fausta, interrupting me, ‘is not less than love, but greater. It is the sacred tie of nature, if I may say so, of brother to sister ; it is friendship.’

‘You say well,’ replied the Queen. ‘I like the sentiment. It is not less than love, but greater. Love is a delirium, a dream, a disease. It is full of disturbance. It is unequal, capricious, unjust ; its felicity, when at the highest, is then nearest to deepest misery ; a step, and it is into unfathomable gulfs of woe. While the object loved is as yet unattained, life is darker than darkest night. When it is attained, it is then oftener like the ocean heaving and tossing from its foundations, than the calm, peaceful lake, which mirrors friendship. And when lost, all is lost, the universe is nothing. Who will deny it the name of madness ? Will love find entrance into Elysium ? Will heaven know more than friendship ? I trust not. It were an element of discord there, where harmony should reign perpetual.’ After a pause, in which she seemed buried in thought, she added musingly— ‘What darkness rests upon the future ! Life, like love, is itself but a dream ; often a brief or a prolonged madness. Its light burns sometimes brightly, oftener obscurely, and with a flickering ray, and then goes out in smoke and darkness. How strange that creatures

so exquisitely wrought as we are, capable of such thoughts and acts, rising by science, and art, and letters, almost to the level of gods, should be fixed here for so short a time, running our race with the unintelligent brute; living not so long as some, dying like all. Could I have ever looked out of this life into the possession of any other beyond it, I believe my aims would have been different. I should not so easily have been satisfied with glory and power: at least I think so; for who knows himself? I should then, I think, have reached after higher kinds of excellence, such for example as, existing more in the mind itself, could be of avail after death—could be carried out of the world—which power, riches, glory, cannot. The greatest service which any philosopher could perform for the human race, would be to demonstrate the certainty of a future existence, in the same satisfactory manner that Euclid demonstrates the truths of geometry. We cannot help believing Euclid if we would, and the truths he has established concerning lines and angles, influence us whether we will or not. Whenever the immortality of the soul shall be proved in like manner, so that men cannot help believing it, so that they shall draw it in with the first elements of all knowledge, then will mankind become a quite different race of beings. Men will be more virtuous and more happy. How is it possible to be either in a very exalted degree, dwelling as we do in this deep obscure, uncertain whether we are mere earth and water, or parts of the divinity; whether we are worms or immortals; men or gods; spending all our days in, at best, miserable perplexity and doubt? Do you remem-

ber, Fausta and Pise, the discourse of Longinus in the garden, concerning the probability of a future life?

‘We do, very distinctly.’

‘And how did it impress you?’

‘It seemed to possess much likelihood,’ replied Fausta, ‘but that was all.’

‘Yes,’ responded the Queen, sighing deeply, ‘that was indeed all. Philosophy, in this part of it, is a mere guess. Even Longinus can but conjecture. And what to his great and piercing intellect stands but in the strength of probability, to ours will, of necessity, address itself in the very weakness of fiction. As it is, I value life only for the brightest and best it can give now, and these to my mind are power and a throne. When these are lost I would fall unregarded into darkness and death.’

‘But,’ I ventured to suggest, ‘you derive great pleasure and large profit from study; from the researches of philosophy, from the knowledge of history, from contemplation of the beauties of art, and the magnificence of nature. Are not these things that give worth to life? If you reasoned aright, and probed the soul well, would you not find that from these, as from hidden springs, a great deal of all the best felicity you have tasted, has welled up? Then, still more, from acts of good and just government; from promoting and witnessing the happiness of your subjects; from private friendship; from affections resting upon objects worthy to be loved—from these has no happiness come worth living for? And beside all this, from an inward consciousness of rectitude? Most of all this may still be yours, though you no longer sat upon a throne, and men held their lives but in your breath.’

‘From such sources,’ replied Zenobia, ‘some streams have issued it may be, that have added to what I have enjoyed ; but, of themselves, they would have been nothing. The lot of earth, being of the low and common herd, is a lot too low and sordid to be taken if proffered. I thank the gods mine has been better. It has been a throne, glory, renown, pomp, and power ; and I have been happy. Stripped of these, and without the prospect of immortality, and I would not live.’

With these words she rose quickly from her seat, saying that she had a further duty to perform. Fausta intreated to be used as an agent or messenger, but could not prevail. Zenobia darting from our side was in a moment lost in the surrounding darkness. We returned to the house of Gracchus.

In a few days, the vast preparations of the Romans being complete, a general assault was made by the whole army upon every part of the walls. Every engine, known to our modern methods of attacking walled cities, was brought to bear. Towers constructed in the former manner were wheeled up to the walls. Battering rams of enormous size, those who worked them being protected by sheds of hide, thundered on all sides at the gates and walls. Language fails to convey an idea of the energy, the fury, the madness of the onset. The Roman army seemed as if but one being, with such equal courage and contempt of danger and death was the dreadful work performed. But the Queen’s defences have again proved superior to all the power of Aurelian. Her engines have dealt death and ruin in awful measure among the assailants. The

moat and the surrounding plain are filled and covered with the bodies of the slain. As night came on after a long day of uninterrupted conflict, the troops of Aurelian, baffled and defeated at every point, withdrew to their tents, and left the city to repose.

The temples of the gods have resounded with songs of thanksgiving for this new deliverance, garlands have been hung around their images, and gifts laid upon their altars. Jews and Christians, Persians and Egyptians, after the manner of their worship, have added their voices to the general chorus.

Again there has been a pause. The Romans have rested after the late fierce assault to recover strength, and the city has breathed free. Many are filled with new courage and hope, and the discontented spirits are silenced. The praises of Zenobia, next to those of the gods, fill every mouth. The streets ring with songs composed in her honor.

Another day of excited expectations and bitter disappointment.

It was early reported that forces were seen approaching from the east, on the very skirts of the plain, and that they could be no other than the long-looked-for Persian army. Before its approach was indicated to those upon the highest towers of the gates, by the clouds of dust hovering over it, it was evident from the extraordinary commotion in the Roman intrenchments, that somewhat unusual had taken place. Their scouts must have brought in early intelligence of the advancing foe. Soon as the news spread through the city the most extravagant demonstrations of joy broke forth on

all sides. Even the most moderate and sedate could not but give way to expressions of heartfelt satisfaction. The multitudes poured to the walls to witness a combat upon which the existence of the city seemed suspended.

‘Father,’ said Fausta, after Gracchus had communicated the happy tidings, ‘I cannot sit here—let us hasten to the towers of the Persian gate, whence we may behold the encounter.’

‘I will not oppose you,’ replied Gracchus, ‘but the sight may cost you naught but tears and pain. Persia’s good will, I fear, will not be much, nor manifested by large contributions to our cause. If it be what I suspect—but a paltry subdivision of her army, sent here rather to be cut in pieces than aught else—it will but needlessly afflict and irritate.’

‘Father, I would turn away from no evil that threatens Palmyra. Besides, I should suffer more from imagined, than from real disaster. Let us hasten to the walls.’

We flew to the Persian gate.

‘But why,’ asked Fausta, addressing Gracchus on the way, ‘are you not more elated? What suspicion do you entertain of Sapor? Will he not be sincerely desirous to aid us?’

‘I fear not,’ replied Gracchus. ‘If we are to be the conquering party in this war, he will send such an army as would afterward make it plain that he had intended an act of friendship, and done the duty of an ally. If we are to be beaten, he will lose little in losing such an army, and will easily, by placing the matter in certain lights, convince the Romans that

their interests had been consulted, rather than ours. We can expect no act of true friendship from Sapor. Yet he dares not abandon us. Were Hormisdas upon the throne, our prospects were brighter.'

'I pray the gods that ancient wretch may quickly perish then,' cried Fausta, 'if such might be the consequences to us. Why is he suffered longer to darken Persia and the earth with his cruel despotism!'

'His throne shakes beneath him,' replied Gracchus; 'a breath may throw it down.'

As we issued forth upon the walls, and then mounted to the battlements of the highest tower, whence the eye took in the environs of the city, and even the farthest verge of the plain, and overlooked, like one's own court-yard, the camp and intrenchments of the Romans—we beheld with distinctness the Persian forces within less than two Roman miles. They had halted and formed, and there apparently awaited the enemy.

No sooner had Gracchus surveyed well the scene, than he exclaimed, 'The gods be praised! I have done Sapor injustice. Yonder forces are such as may well call forth all the strength of the Roman army. In that case there will be much for us to do. I must descend and to the post of duty.'

So saying he left us.

'I suppose,' said Fausta, 'in case the enemy be such as to draw off the larger part of the Roman army, sorties will be made from the gates upon their camp?'

'Yes,' I rejoined; 'if the Romans should suffer themselves to be drawn to a distance, and their forces divided, a great chance would fall into the hands of

the city. But that they will not do. You perceive the Romans move not, but keep their station just where they are. They will oblige the Persians to commence the assault upon them in their present position, or there will be no battle.'

'I perceive their policy now,' said Fausta. 'And the battle being fought so near the walls, they are still as strongly beleaguered as ever—at least half their strength seems to remain within their intrenchments. See, see! the Persian army is on the march. It moves toward the city. Now again it halts.'

'It hopes to entice Aurelian from his position, so as to put power into our hands. But they will fail in their object.'

'Yes, I fear they will,' replied Fausta. 'The Romans remain fixed as statues in their place.'

'Is it not plain to you, Fausta,' said I, 'that the Persians conceive not the full strength of the Roman army? Your eye can now measure their respective forces.'

'It is too plain, alas!' said Fausta. 'If the Persians should defeat the army now formed, there is another within the trenches to be defeated afterwards. Now they move again. Righteous gods, interpose in our behalf!'

At this moment indeed the whole Persian army put itself into quick and decisive motion, as if determined to dare all—and achieve all for their ally, if fate should so decree. It was a sight beautiful to behold, but of an interest too painful almost to be endured. The very existence of a city and an empire seemed to hang upon its issues; and here, looking on and awaiting the

decisive moment, was as it were the empire itself assembled upon the walls of its capital, with which, if it should fall, the kingdom would also fall, and the same ruin cover both. The Queen herself was there to animate and encourage by her presence, not only the hearts of all around, but even the distant forces of the Persians, who, from their position, might easily behold the whole extent of the walls and towers, covered with an innumerable multitude of the besieged inhabitants, who, by waving their hands, and by every conceivable demonstration, gave them to feel more deeply than they could otherwise have done, how much was depending upon their skill and bravery.

Soon after the last movement of the Persians, the light troops of either army encountered, and by a discharge of arrows and javelins, commenced the attack. Then in a few moments, it being apparently impossible to restrain the impatient soldiery, the battle became general. The cry of the onset and the clash of arms fell distinctly upon our ears. Long, long, were the opposing armies mingled together in one undistinguishable mass, waging an equal fight. Now it would sway toward the one side, and now toward the other, heaving and bending as a field of ripe grain to the fitful breeze. Fausta sat with clenched hands and straining eye, watching the doubtful fight, and waiting the issue in speechless agony. A deep silence, as of night and death, held the whole swarming multitude of the citizens, who hardly seemed as if they dared breathe while what seemed the final scene was in the act of being performed.

Suddenly a new scene, and more terrific because

nearer, burst upon our sight. At a signal given by Zenobia from the high tower which she occupied, the gates below us flew open, and Zabdas, at the head of all the flower of the Palmyra cavalry, poured forth, followed closely from this and the other gates by the infantry. The battle now raged between the walls and the Roman intrenchments as well as beyond. The whole plain was one field of battle and slaughter. Despair lent vigor and swiftness to the horse and foot of Palmyra; rage at the long continued contest, revenge for all they had lost and endured, nerved the Roman arm, and gave a double edge to its sword. Never before, my Curtius, had I beheld a fight in which every blow seemed so to carry with it the whole soul, boiling with wrath, of him who gave it. Death sat upon every arm.

‘Lucius!’ cried Fausta. I started, for it had been long that she had uttered not a word.

‘Lucius! unless my eye grows dim and lies, which the gods grant, the Persians! look! they give way—is it not so? Immortal gods, forsake not my country!’

‘The battle may yet turn,’ I said, turning my eyes where she pointed, and seeing it was so—‘despair not, dear Fausta. If the Persians yield—see, Zabdas has mounted the Roman intrenchments.’

‘Yes—they fly,’ screamed Fausta, and would madly have sprung over the battlements, but that I seized and held her. At the same moment a cry arose that Zabdas was slain—her eye caught his noble form as it fell backwards from his horse, and with a faint exclamation, ‘Palmyra is lost!’ fell lifeless into my arms.

- While I devoted myself to her recovery, cries of distress and despair fell from all quarters upon my ear. And when I had succeeded in restoring her to consciousness, the fate of the day was decided—the Persians were routed—the Palmyrenes were hurrying in wild confusion before the pursuing Romans, and pressing into the gates.

‘Lucius,’ said Fausta, ‘I am sorry for this weakness. But to sit as it were chained here, the witness of such disaster, is too much for mere mortal force. Could I but have mingled in that fight! Ah, how cruel the slaughter of those flying troops! Why do they not turn, and at least die with their faces toward the enemy? Let us now go and seek Calpurnius and Gracchus.’

‘We cannot yet, Fausta, for the streets are thronged with this flying multitude.’

‘It is hard to remain here, the ears rent, and the heart torn by these shrieks of the wounded and dying. How horrible this tumult! It seems as if the world were expiring. There—the gates are swinging upon their hinges; they are shut. Let us descend.’

We forced our way as well as we could through the streets, crowded now with soldiers and citizens—the soldiers scattered and in disorder, the citizens weeping and alarmed—some hardly able to drag along themselves, others sinking beneath the weight of the wounded whom they bore upon their shoulders, or upon lances and shields as upon a litter. The way was all along obstructed by the bodies of men and horses who had there fallen and died, their wounds allowing them to proceed no further, or who had been run down

and trampled to death in the tumult and hurry of the entrance.

After a long and weary struggle, we reached the house of Gracchus—still solitary—for neither he nor Calpurnius had returned. The slaves gathered around us to know the certainty and extent of the evil. When they had learned it, their sorrow for their mistress, whom they loved for her own sake, and whom they saw overwhelmed with grief, made them almost forget that they only were suffering these things who had inflicted a worse injury upon themselves. I could not but admire a virtue which seemed of double lustre from the circumstances in which it was manifested.

Calpurnius had been in the thickest of the fight, but had escaped unhurt. He was near Zabdas when he fell, and revenged his death by hewing down the soldier who had pierced him with his lance.

‘Zabdas,’ said Calpurnius, when in the evening we recalled the sad events of the day, ‘was not instantly killed by the thrust of the spear, but falling backwards from his horse, found strength and life enough remaining to raise himself upon his knee, and cheer me on, as I flew to revenge his death upon the retreating Roman. As I returned to him, having completed my task, he had sunk upon the ground, but was still living, and his eye bright with its wonted fire. I raised him in my arms, and lifting him upon my horse, moved toward the gate, intending to bring him within the walls. But he presently entreated me to desist.’

“I die,” said he; “it is all in vain, noble Piso. Lay me at the root of this tree, and that shall be my bed, and its shaft my monument.”

‘I took him from the horse as he desired.’

“Place me,” said he, “with my back against the tree, and my face toward the intrenchments, that while I live I may see the battle. Piso, tell the Queen that to the last hour I am true to her. It has been my glory in life to live but for her, and my death is a happiness, dying for her. Her image swims before me now, and over her hovers a winged victory. The Romans fly—I knew it would be so—the dogs cannot stand before the cavalry of Palmyra—they never could—they fled at Antioch. Hark!—there are the shouts of triumph—bring me my horse—Zenobia! live and reign forever!”

‘With these words and in this happy delusion, his head fell upon his bosom, and he died. I returned to the conflict; but it had become a rout, and I was borne along with the rushing throng toward the gates.’

After a night of repose and quiet, there has come another day of adversity. The hopes of the city have again been raised, only again to be disappointed. The joyful cry was heard from the walls in the morning, that the Saracens and Armenians with united forces were in the field. Coming so soon upon the fatiguing duty of the last day, and the Roman army not having received reinforcements from the West, it was believed that the enemy could not sustain another onset as fierce as that of the Persians. I hastened once more to the walls—Fausta being compelled by Gracchus to remain within the palace—to witness as I believed another battle.

The report I found true. The allied forces of those nations were in sight—the Romans were already drawn from their encampment to encounter them. The same

policy was pursued on their part as before. They awaited the approach of the new enemy just on the outer side of their works. The walls and towers as far as the eye could reach were again swarming with the population of Palmyra.

For a long time neither army seemed disposed to move.

‘They seem not very ready to try the fortune of another day,’ said a citizen to me standing by my side. ‘Nor do I wonder. The Persians gave them rough handling. A few thousands more on their side, and the event would not have been as it was. Think you not the sally under Zabdas was too long deferred?’

‘It is easy afterward,’ I replied, ‘to say how an action should have been performed. It requires the knowledge and wisdom of a god never to err. There were different judgments I know, but for myself I believe the Queen was right; that is, whether Zabdas had left the gates earlier or later, the event would have been the same.’

‘What means that?’ suddenly exclaimed my companion; ‘see you yonder herald bearing a flag of truce, and proceeding from the Roman ranks? It bodes no good to Palmyra. What think you the purpose is?’

‘It may be but to ask a forbearance of arms for a few hours, or a day perhaps. Yet it is not the custom of Rome. I cannot guess.’

‘That can I,’ exclaimed another citizen on my other side. ‘Neither in the Armenians nor yet the Saracens can so much trust be reposed as in a Christian or a Jew. They are for the strongest. Think you they have come to fight? Not if they can treat to better purpose. The

Romans, who know by heart the people of the whole earth, know them. Mark me, they will draw never a sword. As the chances are now, they will judge the Romans winners, and a little gold will buy them.'

'The gods forbid,' cried the other, 'that it should be so; they are the last hope of Palmyra. If they fail us, we must e'en throw open our gates, and take our fate at the mercy of Aurelian.'

'Never while I have an arm that can wield a sword, shall a gate of Palmyra swing upon its hinge to let in an enemy.'

'Food already grows short,' said the first; 'better yield than starve.'

'Thou, friend, art in no danger for many a day, if, as is fabled of certain animals, thou canst live on thine own fat. Or if it came to extremities, thou wouldst make a capital stew or roast for others.'

At which the surrounding crowd laughed heartily, while the fat man, turning pale, slunk away and disappeared.

'That man,' said one, 'would betray a city for a full meal.'

'I know him well,' said another; 'he is the earliest at the markets, where you may always see him feeling out with his fat finger the parts of meats that are kindred to himself. His soul, could it be seen, would be of the form of a fat kidney. His riches he values only as they can be changed into food. Were all Palmyra starved, he, were he sought, would be found in some deep-down vault, bedded in the choicest meats—enough to stand a year's siege, and leave his paunch as far about as 't is to-day. See, the Queen betrays anxiety. The gods shield her from harm!'

Zenobia occupied the same post of observation as before. She paced to and fro with a hasty and troubled step the narrow summit of the tower, where she had placed herself.

After no long interval of time, the Roman herald was seen returning from the camp of the Armenians. Again he sallied forth from the tent of Aurelian, on the same errand. It was too clear now that negotiations were going on which might end fatally for Palmyra. Doubt, fear, anxiety, intense expectation kept the multitude around me in breathless silence, standing at fixed gaze, like so many figures of stone.

They stood not long in this deep and agonizing suspense; for no sooner did the Roman herald reach the tents of the allied armies, and hold brief parley with their chiefs, than he again turned toward the Roman intrenchments at a quick pace, and at the same moment the tents of the other party were struck, and while a part commenced a retreat, another and larger part moved as auxiliaries to join the camp of Aurelian.

Cries of indignation, rage, grief and despair, then burst from the miserable crowds, as with slow and melancholy steps they turned from the walls to seek again their homes. Zenobia was seen once to clasp her hands, turning her face toward the heavens. As she emerged from the tower and ascended her chariot, the enthusiastic throngs failed not to testify their unshaken confidence and determined spirit of devotion to her and her throne, by acclamations that seemed to shake the very walls themselves.

This last has proved a heavier blow to Palmyra than

the former. It shows that their cause is regarded by the neighboring powers as a losing one, or already lost, and that hope, so far as it rested upon their friendly interposition, must be abandoned. The city is silent and sad. Almost all the forms of industry having ceased, the inhabitants are doubly wretched through their necessary idleness; they can do little but sit and brood over their present deprivations, and utter their dark bodings touching the future. They who obtained their subsistence by ministering to the pleasures of others, are now the first to suffer; for there are none to employ their services. Streets, which but a little while ago resounded with notes of music and the loud laughter of those who lived to pleasure, are now dull and deserted. The brilliant shops are closed, the fountains forsaken, the Porticos solitary, or they are frequented by a few who resort to them chiefly to while away some of the melancholy hours that hang upon their hands. And they who are abroad seem not like the same people. Their step is now measured and slow—the head bent—no salutation greets the passing stranger or acquaintance, or only a few cold words of inquiry, which pass from cold lips into ears as cold. Apathy—lethargy—stupor—seem fast settling over all. They would indeed bury all, I believe, were it not that the parties of the discontented increase in number and power, which compels the friends of the Queen to keep upon the alert. The question of surrender is now openly discussed. ‘It is useless,’ it is said, ‘to hold out longer. Better make the best terms we can. If we save the city by an early capitulation from destruction, coming off with our lives and a portion of our goods,

it is more than we shall get if the act be much longer postponed. Every day of delay adds to our weakness, while it adds also to the vexation and rage of the enemy, who the more and longer he suffers, will be less inclined to treat us with indulgence.'

These may be said to have reason on their side, but the other party are inflamed with national pride and devotion to Zenobia, and no power of earth is sufficient to bend them. They are the principal party for numbers; much more for rank and political power. They will hold out till the very last moment—till it is reduced to a choice between death and capitulation; and, on the part of the Queen and the great spirits of Palmyra, death would be their unhesitating choice, were it not for the destruction of so many with them. They will therefore, until the last loaf of bread is divided, keep the gates shut; then throw them open, and meet the terms, whatever they may be, which the power of the conqueror may impose.

A formidable conspiracy has been detected, and the supposed chiefs of it seized and executed.

The design was to secure the person of the Queen, obtain by a violent assault one of the gates, and sallying out, deliver her into the hands of the Romans, who, with her in their power, could immediately put an end to the contest. There is little doubt that Antiochus was privy to it, although those who suffered betrayed him not, if that were the fact. But it has been urged with some force in his favor, that none who suffered would have felt regard enough for him

to have hesitated to sacrifice him, if by doing so they could have saved their own lives or others.

Zenobia displayed her usual dauntless courage, her clemency, and her severity. The attack was made upon her, surrounded by her small body-guard, as she was returning toward evening from her customary visit of observation to the walls. It was sudden, violent, desperate; but the loyalty and bravery of the guards was more than a match for the assassins, aided too by the powerful arm of the Queen herself, who was no idle spectator of the fray. It was a well-laid plot, and but for an accidental addition which was made at the walls to the Queen's guard, might have succeeded; for the attack was made just at the Persian gate, and the keeper of the gate had been gained over. Had the guard been overpowered but for a moment, they would have shot the gate too quickly for the citizens to have roused to her rescue. Such of the conspirators as were not slain upon the spot were secured. Upon examination, they denied the participation of others than themselves in the attempt, and died, such of them as were executed, involving none in their ruin. The Queen would not permit a general slaughter of them, though urged to do so. 'The ends of justice and the safety of the city,' she said, 'would be sufficiently secured, if an example were made of such as seemed manifestly the chief movers. But there should be no indulgence of the spirit of revenge.' Those accordingly were beheaded, the others imprisoned.

While these long and weary days are passing away, Gracchus, Fausta, Calpurnius and myself are often at the palace of Zenobia. The Queen is gracious, as she

ever is, but laboring under an anxiety and an inward sorrow, that imprint themselves deeply upon her countenance, and reveal themselves in a greater reserve of manner. While she is not engaged in some active service she is buried in thought, and seems like one revolving difficult and perplexing questions. Sometimes she breaks from these moments of reverie with some sudden question to one or another of those around her, from which we can obscurely conjecture the subjects of her meditations. With Longinus, Otho, and Gracchus she passes many of her hours in deep deliberation. At times, when apparently nature cries out for relief, she will join us as we sit diverting our minds by conversation upon subjects as far removed as possible from the present distresses, and will, as formerly, shed the light of her penetrating judgment upon whatever it is we discuss. But she soon falls back into herself again, and remains silent and abstracted, or leaves us and retreats to her private apartments.

Suddenly the Queen has announced a project which fills the city with astonishment at its boldness, and once more lights up hope within the bosoms of the most desponding.

Soon as her own mind had conceived and matured it, her friends and counsellors were summoned to receive it from her, and pronounce their judgment. Would that I could set before you, my Curtius, this wonderful woman as she stood before us at this interview. Never before did she seem so great, or of such transcendent beauty—if under such circumstances such a thought may be expressed. Whatever of melancholy

had for so long a time shed its gloom over her features was now gone. The native fire of her eye was restored and doubled, as it seemed, by the thoughts which she was waiting to express. A spirit greater than even her own, appeared to animate her, and to breathe an unwonted majesty into her form, and over the countenance.

She greeted all with the warmth of a friend, and besought them to hear her while she presented a view of the present condition of their affairs, and then proposed what she could not but believe might still prove a means of final deliverance—at least, it might deserve their careful consideration. After having gone over the course that had been pursued and defended it, as that alone which became the dignity and honor of a sovereign and independent power, she proceeded thus :

‘ We are now, it is obvious to all, at the last extremity. If no new outlet be opened from the difficulties which environ us, a few days will determine our fate. We must open our gates and take such mercy as our conquerors may bestow. The provision laid up in the public granaries is nearly exhausted. Already has it been found necessary greatly to diminish the amount of the daily distribution. Hope in any power of our own seems utterly extinct : if any remain, it rests upon foreign interposition, and of this I do not despair. I still rely upon Persia. I look with confidence to Sapor for further and yet larger succors. In the former instance, it was apprehended by many—I confess I shared the apprehension—that there would be on the part of Persia but a parade of friendship, with nothing of reality. But you well know it was far otherwise.

There was a sincere and vigorous demonstration in our behalf. Persia never fought a better field, and with slightly larger numbers would have accomplished our rescue. My proposition is, that we sue again at the court of Sapor—no, not again, for the first was a free-will offering—and that we fail not, I would go myself my own ambassador, and solicit what so solicited, my life upon it, will not be refused. You well know that I can bear with me jewels gathered during a long reign of such value as to plead eloquently in my cause, since the tithe of them would well repay the Persian for all his kingdom might suffer for our sakes.'

'What you propose, great Queen,' said Longinus, as Zenobia paused, 'agrees with your whole life. But how can we, who hold you as we do, sit in our places and allow you alone to encounter the dangers of such an enterprise? For without danger it cannot be—from the robber of the desert, from the Roman, from the Persian. In disguise and upon the road, you may suffer the common fate of those who travel where, as now, marauders of all nations swarm; Sapor may, in his capricious policy, detain you prisoner; Aurelian may intercept. Let your servants prevail with you to dismiss this thought from your mind. You can name no one of all this company who will not plead to be your substitute.'

There was not one present who did not spring upon his feet, and express his readiness to undertake the charge.

'I thank you all,' said the Queen, 'but claim, in this perhaps the last act of my reign, to be set free in your indulgence to hold an unobstructed course. If in your

honest judgments you confess that of all who could appear at the court of Sapor, I should appear there as the most powerful pleader for Palmyra, it is all I ask you to determine. Is such your judgment ?'

'It is,' they all responded—'without doubt it is.'

'Then am I resolved. And the enterprise itself you judge wise and of probable success ?'

'We do. The reasons are just upon which it is founded. It is greatly conceived, and the gods giving you safe conduct to Sapor, we cannot doubt a happy result.'

'Then all that remains is, to contrive the manner of escape from the city and through the Roman camp.'

'There is first one thing more,' said the Princess Julia, suddenly rising from her mother's side, but with a forced and trembling courage, 'which remains for me to do. If there appear any want of maidenly reserve in what I say, let the cause, good friends, for which I speak and act, be my excuse. It is well known to you who are familiar with the councils of the state, that not many months past Persia sought through me an alliance with Palmyra. But in me, you, my mother and Queen, have hitherto found an uncomplying daughter—and you, Fathers, a self-willed Princess. I now seek what before I have shunned. Although I know not the Prince Hormisdas—report speaks worthily of him—but of him I think not—yet if by the offer of myself I could now help the cause of my country, the victim is ready for the altar. Let Zenobia bear with her not only the stones torn from her crown, but this which she so often has termed her living jewel, and if the others, first proffered, fail to reach the Persian's heart,

then, but not till then, add the other to the scale. If it weigh to buy deliverance and prosperity to Palmyra—though I can never be happy—yet I shall be happy if the cause of happiness to you.’

‘My noble child!’ said Zenobia, ‘I cannot have so startled the chiefs of Palmyra by a new and unthought-of project, as I am now amazed in my turn. I dreamed not of this. But I cannot hinder you in your purpose. It ensures success to your country; and to be the instrument of that, will be a rich compensation for even the largest sacrifice of private affections.’

The counsellors and senators who were present expressed a great, and I doubt not sincere unwillingness that so dangerous a service should be undertaken by those whom they so loved, and whom beyond all others they would shield with their lives from the very shadow of harm. But they were overcome by the determined spirit both of the Queen and Julia, and by their own secret conviction that it was the only act in the power of mortals by which the existence of the empire and city could be preserved.

At this point of the interview, Calpurnius, whom we had missed, entered, and learning what had passed, announced that by a channel not to be mistrusted, he had received intelligence of a sudden rising in Persia, of the assassination of Sapor, and the elevation of Hormisdas to the throne of his father. This imparted to all the liveliest pleasure, and seemed to take away from the project of the Queen every remaining source of inquietude and doubt. Calpurnius at the same moment was besought, and offered himself to serve as the Queen’s companion and guide. The chosen friend

of Hormisdas, and whose friendship he had not forfeited by his flight—no one could so well as he advocate her cause with the new king.

‘But how is it,’ inquired Longinus, ‘that you obtain foreign intelligence, the city thus beset?’

‘It may well be asked,’ replied Calpurnius. ‘It is through the intelligence and cunning of a Jew well known in Palmyra, and throughout the world I believe, called Isaac. By him was I rescued from Persian captivity, and through him have I received letters thence, ever since the city has been besieged. He is acquainted with a subterranean passage—in the time of Trajan, he has informed me, a public conduit, but long since much choked and dry—by which one may pass from the city under and beyond the lines of the Roman intrenchments, emerging into a deep ravine or fissure, grown thickly over with vines and olives. Once it was of size sufficient to admit an elephant with his rider; now, he says, has it become so obstructed, and in some places so fallen in, that it is with difficulty that a dromedary of but the common size can force his way through.’

‘Through this then the Queen may effect her escape,’ said Longinus.

‘With perfect ease and security,’ rejoined Calpurnius. ‘At the outlet, Isaac shall be in waiting with the fleetest dromedaries of the royal stables.’

‘We are satisfied,’ said Longinus; ‘let it be as you say. The gods prosper the pious service!’

So ended the conversation.

Of the ancient aqueduct or conduit, you have already heard from me; it is the same by which Isaac has

transmitted my late letters to Portia—which I trust you have received and read. To Portia alone—be not offended—do I pour out my whole soul. From her learn more of what relates to the Princess.

I returned from the palace of Zenobia overwhelmed with a thousand painful sensations. But this I need not say.

Fausta, upon learning the determination of the Queen, which had been communicated not even to her, exclaimed—‘There, Lucius, I have always told you Palmyra brought forth women! Where in the wide world shall two be found to match Zenobia and Julia? But when is the time fixed for the flight?’

‘To-morrow night.’

‘I will to the palace. These may be the last hours permitted by the gods to our friendship. I must not lose one of them.’

I went not there again.

Late on the evening of the following day Fausta returned—her countenance betraying what she had suffered in parting from those two, her bosom friends. It was long ere she could possess herself so far as to give to Gracchus and myself a narrative of what had occurred. To do it, asked but few words.

‘We have passed the time,’ she said at length, ‘as you might suppose those would about to be separated—forever; yes, I feel that I have seen them for the last time. It is like a conviction inspired by the gods. We did naught till the hour of attiring for the flight arrived, but sit, look upon each other, embrace, and weep. Not that Zenobia, always great, lost the true command of herself; or omitted aught that should be

done; but that she was a woman, and a mother, and a friend, as well as a Queen and a divinity. But I can say no more.'

'Yet one thing,' she suddenly resumed; 'alas! I had well nigh forgotten it—it should have been said first. What think you? the Indian slave, Sindarina, was to accompany the Queen, but at the hour of departure she was missing. Her chamber was empty—the Arabian disguise, in which all were to be arrayed, lying on her bed—she herself to be found neither there nor any where within the palace. Another of the Queen's women was chosen in her place. What make you of it?'

'Treason!—treachery!' cried Gracchus, and springing from his seat, shouted for a horse.

'The gods forgive me,' cried the afflicted Gracchus, 'that this has been forgotten! Why, why did I not lay to heart the hints which you dropped!'

'In very truth,' I replied, 'they were almost too slight to build even a suspicion upon. The Queen heeded them not—and I myself had dismissed them from my mind not less than yourself.'

'Not a moment is to be lost,' said Gracchus; 'the slave must be found, and all whom we suspect seized.'

The night was passed in laborious search, both of the slave and Antiochus. The whole city was abroad in a common cause. All the loose companions of Antiochus and the young princes were taken and imprisoned; the suspected leaders in the affair, after a scrutinizing search and public proclamation, could not be found. The inference was clear, agonizing as clear, that the Queen's flight had been betrayed.

Another day has revealed the whole. Isaac, who acted as guide through the conduit, and was to serve in the same capacity till the party were secure within a Persian fortress, not far from the banks of the Euphrates, has, by a messenger, a servant of the palace, found means to convey a relation of what befel after leaving Palmyra.

‘Soon,’ he says, ‘as the shades of evening fell, the Queen, the Princess Julia, Nichomachus, a slave, and Calpurnius, arrayed in the garb of Arabs of the desert, together with a guard of ten soldiers, selected for their bravery and strength, met by different routes at the mouth of the old conduit. So noble a company had I never before the charge of. Thou wouldst never have guessed the Queen through the veil of her outlandish garment. She became it well. Not one was more a man than she. For the Princess, a dull eye would have seen through her. Entering a little way in utter darkness, I then bid them stand while I lighted torches. The Queen was near me the while, and asked me the length of the passage, and whether the walls were of that thickness as to prevent the voice from being heard above.

“‘Till we reach one particular spot, where the arch is partly fallen in,” I said, “we may use our tongues as freely and as loud as we please; at that place there will be need of special caution, as it is directly beneath the Roman intrenchments. Of our approach thereto I will give timely warning.”

‘I took occasion to say, that I was sorry the Queen of Palmyra should be compelled to pass through so gloomy a cavern, but doubtless he who was with

Deborah and Judith would not forsake her who was so fast a friend to his people, and who, if rumor might be believed, was even herself one of them. This, Roman, you will doubtless think bold ; but how could one who was full refrain ? I even added, " Fear not ; he who watches over Judah and Israel, will not fail to appear for one by whose arm their glories are to be restored." The Queen at that smiled, and if a countenance may be read, which I hold it can, as well as a book, it spoke favorable things for Jerusalem.

'When our torches were kindled, we went on our way ; a narrow way and dark. We went in silence too, for I quickly discerned that minds and hearts were too busy with themselves and their own sorrows and fears to choose to be disturbed. Ah, Roman, how many times harder the lot of the high than the low ! When we drew nigh to the fissure in the arch, the torches were again extinguished, and we proceeded at a snail's pace and with a hyena's foot while we were passing within a few feet of the then, as I doubted not, sleeping Romans. As we came beneath the broken and open part, I was startled by the sound of voices. Soldiers were above conversing. As we paused through apprehension, a few words were distinctly heard.

"The times will not bear it," muttered one. "'T is a vain attempt."

"His severity is cruel," said another. "Gods ! when before was it heard of, that a soldier, and such a one, for what every one does whom chance favors, should be torn limb from limb ? The trees that wrenched Stilcho asunder, ere they grow too stiff, may serve a turn on 'Hand-to-his-Sword' himself. He will fatten

on these starved citizens when he climbs over their walls."

"O no, by Jupiter!" said the first, "it is far likelier he will let them off, as he did at Tyana, and we lose our sport. It is his own soldiers' blood he loves."

"He may yet learn," replied the other, "that soldiers wear weapons for one purpose as well as another. Hark! what noise was that?"

"It is but some rat at work within this old arch. Come, let us to bed."

'They moved away, and we, breathing again, passed along, and soon re-lighted our torches.

'After walking a weary distance from this point, and encountering many obstacles, we at length reached the long-desired termination. The dromedaries were in readiness, and mounting them without delay, we ascended the steep sides of the ravine, and then at a rapid pace sought the open plains. When they were attained, I considered that we were out of all danger from the Romans, and had only to apprehend the ordinary dangers of this route during a time of war, when freebooters of all the neighboring tribes are apt to abound. "Here," I said to the Queen, "we will put our animals to their utmost speed, as the way is plain and smooth—having regard only," I added, "to your and the Princess's strength."—"On, on, in the name of the gods!" said they both; "we can follow as fast as you shall lead." And on we flew with the speed of the wind. The Queen's animals were like spirits of the air, with such amazing fleetness and sureness of foot did they shoot over the surface of the earth. The way was wholly our own. We met none; we saw none. Thrice we

paused to relieve those not accustomed to such speed, or to the peculiar motion of this animal. But at each resting place, the Queen with impatience hastened us away, saying, that "rest could be better had at once when we had crossed the river; and once upon the other bank, and we were safe."

'The first flush of morning was upon the sky as we came within sight of the valley of the Euphrates. The river was itself seen faintly gleaming as we wound down the side of a gentle hill. The country here was broken, as it had been for many of the last miles we had rode—divided by low ridges, deep ravines, and stretches of wood and bush. So that to those approaching the banks in the same general direction, many distinct paths offered themselves. It was here, O Piso, just as we reached the foot of this little hill, riding more slowly by reason of the winding road, that my quick ear caught at a distance the sounds of other hoofs upon the ground beside our own. My heart sank within me—a sudden faintness spread over my limbs. But at the instant I gave the alarm to our troop, and at greatest risk of life and limb we put our beasts to their extreme speed, and dashed toward the river. I still, as we rode, turning my ear in the direction of the sound, heard with distinctness the clatter of horses' hoofs. Our beasts were dromedaries; in that lay my hope. Two boats awaited us among the rushes on the river's bank, in the keeping of those who had been sent forward for that purpose; and off against them, upon the other side of the stream, lay a small Persian village and fortress. Once off in the boats but ever so short a distance, and we were safe. On we

flew, and on I was each moment conscious came pursuers, whoever they might be. We reached the river's edge.—“Quick! for your lives,” I cried. The Queen, the Princess, and four men in this boat; the packages in the other.—In a moment and less than that, we were in our boat, a troop of horse at the same instant sweeping like a blast of the desert down the bank of the river. We shot into the stream; but ere the other could gain the water, the Romans, as we now too plainly saw them to be, were upon them. A brief but desperate strife ensued. The Romans were five for one of the others, and quickly putting them to the sword, sprang into their boat.

“Pull! pull!” cried the Queen, the first words she had uttered, “for your lives and Palmyra’s.” They gained upon us. We had six oars, they eight. But the strength of three seemed to nerve the arm of Calpurnius.

“Immortal gods!” cried he, in inexpressible agony, “they near us!” and straining with redoubled energy his oar snapped, and the boat whirled from her course.

“All is lost!” ejaculated Zenobia.

A Roman voice was now heard, “Yield you, and your lives are safe.”

“Never,” cried Calpurnius, and as the Roman boat struck against ours, he raised his broken oar, and aiming at him who had spoken, lost his balance and plunged headlong into the stream.

“Save him—save him!” cried the Queen, but they heeded her not. “It is vain to contend,” she cried out again; “we yield, but save the life of him who has fallen.”

‘The light was yet not sufficient to see but to a little distance. Nothing was visible upon the smooth surface of the water, nor any sound heard.

‘“His own rash fury has destroyed him,” said the Roman, who we now could discern bore the rank of Centurion.

‘“We seek,” said he, turning toward where the Queen sat, “we seek Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra.”

‘“I am Zenobia,” said the Queen.

‘“The gods be praised therefor!” rejoined the Centurion. “Our commands are to bear you to the tent of Aurelian.”

‘“Do with me as you list,” replied the Queen; “I am in your power.”

‘“To the shore,” exclaimed the Roman; and our boat fastened to the other was soon at the place whence but a moment before it had parted.

‘“Who are these?” asked the Centurion, as we reached the shore, pointing to the Princess, and the attendant slave and secretary. “Our orders extend only to the person of the Queen.”

‘“Divide them not,” I said, willing to spare the Queen the bandying of words with a Roman soldier, “they are of the Queen’s family. They are a part of herself. If thou takest one take all to thy Emperor.”

‘“So be it; and now to your horses, and once more over the plain. It shall go hard, but that what we carry with us will make our fortune with Aurelian.”

‘Saying this, the whole troop formed, placing Zenobia and Julia in the midst, and winding up the banks of the river disappeared.

‘Such, O unhappy Piso, was this disastrous night.

Surely all was done on our part to secure a successful issue. I can discern no defect nor fault. We could not have been more fleet. Swifter beasts never trod the sands of Arabia. What then? Hath there not been, think you, foul play? Whence got the Romans knowledge, not only of our flight, but of the very spot for which we aimed? I doubt not there has been treachery—and that too of the very color of hell. Look to it, and let not the guilty go free.

‘One word touching thy brother. Despond not. I cannot think that he is lost. We were but a furlong from the shore. My belief is, that seeing the capture of the Queen was certain, and that to him, if taken with her in arms against his country, death was inevitable, he, when he fell, rose again at a safe distance, and will yet be found.

‘These things I send in haste by a returning servant of the palace, I remaining both to secure the dromedaries now wandering at will along the banks of the river, and to search diligently for Calpurnius, whom I trust to bear back with me to Palmyra.’

Here, my Curtius, was food for meditation and grief—the renowned Queen of this brilliant capital and kingdom, so late filling a throne that drew the admiration of the world, sitting there in a proud magnificence that cast into shade Persia itself, is in one short night shorn of all her power; a captive at the mercy of a cruel foe; Julia also a captive; my brother, so late redeemed—as I cannot but suppose—dead. I need not nor can I tell you with what emotions I read the fatal letter. The same messenger who delivered it to me

had spread through the city the news of the Queen's captivity. What related to Calpurnius I determined to conceal from Fausta, since it was at least possible that by communicating it I might cause a useless suffering.

Fausta, upon learning the horrors of the night, which she first did from the outcries and lamentations in the streets, seemed more like one dead than alive. She could not weep, the evil was too great for tears. And there being no other way in which to give vent to the grief that wrung her soul in every feeling and affection, I trembled lest reason should be hurled from its seat. She wandered from room to room, her face of the hue of death—but indicating life enough in its intense expression of inward pain—and speechless, save that at intervals in a low tone, 'Zenobia! Palmyra!' fell from her scarcely moving lips. To Gracchus and myself essaying to divert her from thoughts that seemed to prey upon her very life, she said, 'Leave me to wrestle alone with my grief; it is the way to strength. I do not doubt that I shall find it.'

'She is right,' said Gracchus; 'to overcome she must fight her own battle. Our aid but ministers to her weakness.'

It was not long before she rejoined us, tears having brought relief to her over-burdened heart.

Her first inquiry now was for Calpurnius. 'I have feared to ask, for if he too is captive, I know that he is lost. Now I can hear and bear all. How is it, Lucius?'

I answered, that 'he was not a captive, so much was known; but where he now was, or what had befallen

him, was not known. I had reason to believe that he would find his way back through the guidance of Isaac to the city.'

'Alas! I read in your words his fate. But I will not urge you farther. I will live upon all the hope I can keep alive. Yet it is not the death of Calpurnius—nor yet of Zenobia—nor Julia—that wrings the soul and saps its life, like this bitter, bitter disappointment, this base treason of Antiochus. To be so near the summit of our best hopes, only to be cast down into this deep abyss—that is the sting in our calamity that shoots deepest, and for which there is no cure. Is there no other way, father, in which we can explain the capture of the Queen? Accident—could it not be accident that threw the troop of Aurelian in their way?'

'I fear not,' said Gracchus. 'When we add what rumor has heretofore reported of the aims of Antiochus, but which we have all too much contemned him to believe him capable of, to what has now occurred, I think we cannot doubt that he is the author of the evil, seducing into his plot the Queen's slave, through whom he received intelligence of every plan and movement.'

'Ah, cruel treachery! How can one join together the sweet innocent face of Sindarina and such deep hypocrisy! Antiochus surely must have perverted her by magic arts. Of that I am sure. But what fruit can Antiochus hope his treason shall bear for him? Can he think that Palmyra will endure his rule?'

'That,' replied Gracchus, 'must be his hope. The party of the discontented we well know to be large; upon them he thinks he may rely. Then his treason recommending him to Aurelian, he builds upon his

power to establish him upon the throne, and sustain him there till his own strength shall have grown, so that he can stand alone. That the city will surrender upon the news of the Queen's captivity, he doubtless calculates upon as certain.'

'May his every hope,' cried Fausta, 'be blasted, and a little of the misery he has poured without stint into our hearts wring his own, and when he cries for mercy, may he find none!'

'One hope,' I said here, 'if I know aught of the nature of Aurelian, and upon which he must chiefly found his project, will sink under him to his shame and ruin.'

'What mean you?' said Fausta eagerly.

'His belief that Aurelian will reward baseness though to an enemy. He never did it yet, and he cannot do it. Were there within the thick skull of Antiochus the brains of a foolish ostrich, he would have read in the fate of Heraclammon, the rich traitor of Tyana, his own. If I err not, he has indiscreetly enough thrust himself into a lion's den. If Aurelian is fierce, his is the grand and terrific ferocity of the king of beasts.'

'May it be so!' said Fausta. 'There were no providence in the gods did such villany escape punishment, still less, did it grow great. But if Aurelian is such as you describe him, O then is there not reason in the belief that he will do gently by her? Were it compatible with greatness or generosity—and these, you say, belong to the Emperor—to take revenge upon an enemy, thrown by such means into his power? and such an enemy? and that too a woman? Julia too! O immortal gods, how bitter past drinking is this cup!'

‘Yet must you, must we, not lean too confidently upon the dispositions of Aurelian. He is subject, though supreme, to the state, nay, and in some sense to the army; and what he might gladly do of his own free and generous nature, policy and the contrary wishes and sometimes requisitions of his troops, or of the people, compel him to forbear. The usage of Rome toward captive princes has been, and is, cruel. Yet the Emperor does much to modify it, giving it, according to his own temper, a more or less savage character. And Aurelian has displayed great independence in his acts, both of people and soldiers. There is much ground for hope—but it must not pass into confident expectation.’

‘You, Lucius, in former days have known Aurelian well, before fortune raised him to this high eminence. You say you were his friend. Could you not—’

‘No. I fear with scarce any hope of doing good. My residence here during all these troubles will, I doubt not, raise suspicions in the mind of Aurelian which it will not be easy to allay. But whenever I shall have it in my power to present myself before him, I shall not fail to press upon him arguments which, if he shall act freely, cannot I think but weigh with him.’

‘Ought not the city now,’ said Fausta, addressing Gracchus, ‘to surrender, and, if it can do no better, throw itself upon the mercy of Aurelian? I see not now what can be gained by longer resistance, and would not a still protracted refusal to capitulate, and when it must be without the faintest expectation of ultimate success, tend merely and with certainty to exasperate Aurelian, and perhaps embitter him toward the Queen?’

'I can scarcely doubt that it would,' replied Gracchus. 'The city ought to surrender. Soon as the first flood of grief has spent itself, must we hasten to accomplish it if possible. Longinus, to whom will now be entrusted the chief power, will advocate it I am sure—so will Otho, Seleucus, Gabrayas; but the army will, I fear, be opposed to it, and will, more through a certain pride of their order than from any principle, incline to hold out.—It is time I sought Longinus.'

He departed in search of the Greek. I went forth into the streets to learn the opinions and observe the behavior of the people.

The shades of night are around me—the palace is still—the city sleeps. I resume my pen to add a few words to this epistle, already long, but they are words that convey so much that I cannot but add them for my own pleasure not less than yours. They are in brief these,—Calpurnius is alive and once again returned to us. The conjecture of Isaac was a description of the truth. My brother, knowing well that if apprehended his death were certain, had in the outset resolved, if attacked, rather to provoke his death, and insure it in the violence of a conflict, than be reserved for the axe of the Roman executioner. But in the short moment in which he fell headlong into the river, it flashed across his mind—'The darkness favors my escape—I can reach the shore;' so swimming a short distance below the surface, falling down with the stream and softly rising, concealed himself among the reeds upon the margin of the stream. Finding the field in a short time wholly in possession of Isaac, he revealed himself

and joined him, returning to the city as soon as the darkness of the night permitted. Here is a little gleam of light breaking through Fausta's almost solid gloom. A smile has once more played over her features.

In the evening after Calpurnius's return, she tried her harp, but the sounds it gave out only seemed to increase her sorrow, and she threw it from her.

'Music,' said Gracchus, 'is in its nature melancholy, and how, my child, can you think to forget or stifle grief by waking the strings of your harp, whose tones, of all other instruments, are the most melancholy? And yet sometimes sadness seeks sadness, and finds in it its best relief. But now, Fausta, rather let sleep be your minister and nurse.'

So we parted. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

It were a vain endeavor, my Curtius, to attempt to describe the fever of indignation, and rage, and grief, that burned in the bosoms of this unhappy people, as soon as it was known that their Queen was a captive in the hands of the Romans. Those imprisoned upon suspicion of having been concerned in her betrayal would have been torn from their confinement, and sacrificed to the wrath of the citizens, in the first hours of their excitement, but for the formidable guard by which the prisons were defended. The whole population seemed to be in the streets and public places, giving and receiving with eagerness such intelligence as could be obtained. Their affliction is such as it would be had each one lost a parent or a friend. The men rave, or sit, or wander about listless and sad; the women weep; children catch the infection, and lament as for the greatest misfortune that could have overtaken them. The soldiers, at first dumb with amazement at so unlooked-for and unaccountable a catastrophe; afterward, upon learning that it fell out through the treason of Antiochus, bound themselves by oaths never to acknowledge or submit to his authority, though Aurelian himself should impose him upon them, nay, to sacrifice him to the violated honor of the empire, if ever he should fall into their power.

Yet all are not such. The numbers are not con-

temptible of those who, openly or secretly, favor the cause and approve the act of Antiochus. He has not committed so great a crime without some prospect of advantage from it, nor without the assurance that a large party of the citizens, though not the largest, is with him, and will adhere to his fortunes. These are they, who think, and justly think, that the Queen has sacrificed the country to her insane ambition and pride. They cleave to Antiochus, not from personal regard toward him, but because he seems more available for their present purposes than any other, principally through his fool-hardy ambition; and, on the other hand, they abandon the Queen, not for want of personal affection, equal perhaps to what exists in any others, but because they conceive that the power of Rome is too mighty to contend with, and that their best interests rather than any extravagant notions of national honor, ought to prompt their measures.

The city will now give itself up, it is probable, upon the first summons of Aurelian. The council and the senate have determined that to hold out longer than a few days more is impossible. The provisions of the public granaries are exhausted, and the people are already beginning to be pinched with hunger. The rich, and all who have been enabled to subsist upon their own stores, are now engaged in distributing what remains among the poorer sort, who are now thrown upon their compassion. May it not be, that I am to be a witness of a people dying of hunger! Gracchus and Fausta are busily employed in relieving the wants of the suffering.

We have waited impatiently to hear the fate of the Queen. Many reports have prevailed, founded upon what has been observed from the walls. At one time, it has been said that she had perished under the hands of the executioner—at another, that the whole Roman camp had been seen to be thrown into wild tumult, and that she had doubtless fallen a sacrifice to the ungovernable fury of the licentious soldiery. I cannot think either report probable. Aurelian, if he revenged himself by her death, would reserve her for execution on the day of his triumph. But he would never tarnish his glory by such an act. And for the soldiers—I am sure of nothing more than that they are under too rigid a discipline, and hold Aurelian in too great terror, to dare to commit a violence like that which has been imputed to them.

At length—for hours are months in such suspense—we are relieved. Letters have come from Nichomachus to both Longinus and Livia.

First, their sum is, the Queen lives!

I shall give you what I gather from them.

‘When we had parted,’ writes the secretary, ‘from the river’s edge, we were led at a rapid pace over the same path we had just come, to the neighborhood of the Roman camp. I learned from what I overheard of the conversation of the Centurion with his companion at his side, that the flight of the Queen had been betrayed. But beyond that, nothing.

‘We were taken not at once to the presence of Aurelian, but lodged in one of the abandoned palaces in the outskirts of the city—that of Seleucus, if I err not—where, the Queen being assigned the apartments

needful for her and her effects, a guard was set around the building.

‘Here we had remained not long, yet long enough for the Queen to exchange her disguise for her usual robes, when it was announced by the Centurion that we must proceed to the tent of the Emperor. The Queen and the Princess were placed in a close litter, and conveyed secretly there, out of fear of the soldiers, “who,” said the Centurion, “if made aware of whom we carry, would in their rage tear to fragments and scatter to the winds both the litter and its burden.”

‘We were in this manner borne through the camp to the tent of Aurelian. As we entered, the Emperor stood at its upper end, surrounded by the chief persons of his army. He advanced to meet the Queen, and in his changing countenance and disturbed manner might it be plainly seen how even an Emperor, and he the Emperor of the world, felt the presence of a majesty such as Zenobia’s. And never did our great mistress seem more a Queen than now—not through that commanding pride which, when upon her throne, has impressed all who have approached her with a feeling of inferiority, but through a certain dark and solemn grandeur that struck with awe, as of some superior being, those who looked upon her. There was no sign of grief upon her countenance, but many of a deep and rooted sadness, such as might never pass away. No one could behold her and not lament the fortune that had brought her to such a pass. Whoever had thought to enjoy the triumph of exulting over the royal captive, was rebuked by that air of calm dignity and

profound melancholy, which even against the will, touched the hearts of all, and forced their homage.

“It is a happy day for Rome,” said Aurelian, approaching and saluting her, “that sees you, lately Queen of Palmyra and of the East, a captive in the tent of Aurelian.”

“And a dark one for my afflicted country,” replied the Queen.

“It might have been darker,” rejoined the emperor, “had not the good providence of the gods delivered you into my hands.”

“The gods preside not over treachery. And it must have been by treason among those in whom I have placed my most familiar trust, that I am now where and what I am. I can but darkly surmise by whose baseness the act has been committed. It had been a nobler triumph to you, Roman, and a lighter fall to me, had the field of battle decided the fate of my kingdom, and led me a prisoner to your tent.”

“Doubtless it had been so,” replied Aurelian; “yet was it for me to cast away what chance threw into my power? A war is now happily ended, which, had your boat reached the further bank of the Euphrates, might yet have raged—and but to the mutual harm of two great nations. Yet it was both a bold and sagacious device, and agrees well with what was done by you at Antioch, Emesa, and now in the defence of your city. A more determined, a better appointed, or more desperate foe, I have never yet contended with.”

“It were strange, indeed,” replied the Queen, “if you met not with a determined foe, when life and liberty were to be defended. Had not treason, base and

accursed treason, given me up like a chained slave to your power, yonder walls must have first been beaten piecemeal down by your engines, and buried me beneath their ruins, and famine clutched all whom the sword had spared, ere we had owned you master. What is life, when liberty and independence are gone?"

"But why, let me ask," said Aurelian, "were you moved to assert an independency of Rome? How many peaceful and prosperous years have rolled on since Trajan and the Antonines, while you and Rome were at harmony; a part of us and yet independent; allies rather than a subject province; using our power for your defence; yet owning no allegiance. Why was this order disturbed? What madness ruled to turn you against the power of Rome?"

"The same madness," replied Zenobia, "that tells Aurelian he may yet possess the whole world, and sends him here into the far East to wage needless war with a woman—Ambition! Yet had Aurelian always been upon the Roman throne, or one resembling him, it had perhaps been different. There then could have been naught but honor in any alliance that had bound together Rome and Palmyra. But was I, was the late renowned Odenatus, to confess allegiance to base souls such as Aureolus, Gallienus, Balista? While the thirty tyrants were fighting for the Roman crown, was I to sit still, waiting humbly to become the passive prey of whosoever might please to call me his? By the immortal gods, not so! I asserted my supremacy, and made it felt; and in times of tumult and confusion to Rome, while her Eastern provinces were one scene of discord and civil broil, I came in and reduced the

jarring elements, and out of parts broken and sundered, and hostile, constructed a fair and well-proportioned whole. And when once created, and I had tasted the sweets of sovereign and despotic power—what they are thou knowest—was I tamely to yield the whole at the word or threat even of Aurelian? It could not be. So many years as had passed and seen me Queen, not of Palmyra only, but of the East—a sovereign honored and courted at Rome, feared by Persia, my alliance sought by all the neighboring dominions of Asia—had served but to foster in me that love of rule which descended to me from a long line of kings. Sprung from a royal line, and so long upon a throne, it was superior force alone—divine or human—that should drag me from my right. Thou hast been but four years king, Aurelian, monarch of the great Roman world, yet wouldst thou not, but with painful unwillingness, descend and mingle with the common herd. For me, ceasing to reign, I would cease to live.”

“Thy speech,” said Aurelian, “shows thee well worthy to reign. It is no treason to Rome, Carus, to lament that the fates have cast down from a throne, one who filled its seat so well. Hadst thou hearkened to the message of Petronius, thou mightest still, lady, have sat upon thy native seat. The crown of Palmyra might still have girt thy brow.”

“But not of the East,” rejoined the Queen.

“Fight against ambition, Carus! thou seest how, by aiming at too much, it loses all. It is the bane of humanity. When I am dead, may ambition then die, nor rise again.”

“May it be so,” replied his general; “it has greatly

cursed the world. It were better perhaps that it died now."

"It cannot," replied Aurelian; "its life is too strong. I lament too, great Queen, for so I may well call thee, that upon an ancient defender of our Roman honor, upon her who revenged Rome upon the insolent Persian, this heavy fate should fall. I would willingly have met for the first time in a different way the brave conqueror of Sapor, the avenger of the wrongs and insults of the virtuous Valerian. The debt of Rome to Zenobia is great, and shall yet, in some sort at least, be paid. Curses upon those who moved thee to this war. They have brought this calamity upon thee, Queen, not I, nor thou. What ill designing aspirants have urged thee on? This is not a woman's war."

"Was not that a woman's war," replied the Queen, "that drove the Goths from upper Asia? Was not that a woman's war that hemmed Sapor in his capital, and seized his camp? and that which beat Heraclianus, and gained thereby Syria and Mesopotamia? and that which worsted Probus, and so won the crown of Egypt? Does it ask for more, to be beaten by Romans, than to conquer these? Rest assured, great prince, that the war was mine. My people were indeed with me, but it was I who roused, fired, and led them on. I had indeed great advisers. Their names are known throughout the world. Why should I name the renowned Longinus, the princely Gracchus, the invincible Zabdas, the honest Otho? Their names are honored in Rome as well as here. They have been with me; but without lying or vanity, I may say I have been their head."

"Be it so; nevertheless, thy services shall be re-

membered. But let us now to the affairs before us. The city has not surrendered—though thy captivity is known, the gates still are shut. A word from thee would open them.”

“It is a word I cannot speak,” replied the Queen; her countenance expressing now, instead of sorrow, indignation. “Wouldst thou that I too should turn traitor?”

“It surely would not be that,” replied the Emperor. “It can avail naught to contend further—it can but end in a wider destruction, both of your people and my soldiers.”

“Longinus, I may suppose,” said Zenobia, “is now supreme. Let the Emperor address him, and what is right will be done.”

‘Aurelian turned, and held a brief conversation with some of his officers.

“Within the walls,” said the Emperor, again addressing the Queen, “thou hast sons. Is it not so?”

“It is not they,” said the Queen quickly, her countenance growing pale, “it is not they, nor either of them, who have conspired against me!”

“No—not quite so. Yet he who betrayed thee calls himself of thy family. Thy sons surely were not in league with him. Soldiers,” cried the Emperor, “lead forth the great Antiochus, and his slave.”

‘At his name, the Queen started—the Princess uttered a faint cry, and seemed as if she would have fallen.

‘A fold of the tent was drawn aside, and the huge form of Antiochus appeared, followed by the Queen’s slave, her head bent down and eyes cast upon the

ground. If a look could have killed, the first glance of Zenobia, so full of a withering contempt, would have destroyed her base kinsman. He heeded it but so much as to blush and turn away his face from her. Upon Sindarina the Queen gazed with a look of deepest sorrow. The beautiful slave stood there where she entered, not lifting her head, but her bosom rising and falling with some great emotion—conscious, as it seemed, that the Queen's look was fastened upon her, and fearing to meet it. But it was so only for a moment, when raising her head, and revealing a countenance swollen with grief, she rushed toward the Queen, and threw herself at her feet, embracing them, and covering them with kisses. Her deep sobs took away all power of speech. The Queen only said, "My poor Sindarina!"

'The stern voice of Aurelian was first heard, "Bear her away—bear her from the tent."

'A guard seized her, and forcibly separating her from Zenobia, bore her weeping away.

"This," said Aurelian, turning now to Zenobia, "this is thy kinsman, as he tells me—the Prince Antiochus?"

'The Queen replied not.

"He has done Rome a great service." Antiochus raised his head, and straightened his stooping shoulders. "He has the merit of ending a weary and disastrous war. It is a rare fortune to fall to any one. 'Tis a work to grow great upon. Yet, Prince," turning to Antiochus, "the work is not complete. The city yet holds out. If I am to reward thee with the sovereign

power, as thou sayest, thou must open the gates. Canst thou do it?"

"Great Prince," replied the base spirit eagerly, "it is provided for. Allow me but a few moments, and a place proper for it, and the gates I warrant shall quickly swing upon their hinges."

"Ah! do you say so? That is well. What, I pray, is the process?"

"At a signal which I shall make, noble Prince, and which has been agreed upon, every head of every one of the Queen's party rolls in the dust—Longinus, Gracchus, and his daughter, Seleucus, Gabrayas, and a host more—their heads fall. The gates are then to be thrown open."

"Noble Palmyrene, you have the thanks of all. Of the city then we are at length secure. For this, thou wouldst have the rule of it under Rome, wielding a sceptre in the name of the Roman Senate, and paying tribute as a subject province? Is it not so?"

"It is. That is what I would have, and would do, most excellent Aurelian."

"Who are thy associates in this? Are the Queen's sons, Herennianus, Timolaus, Vabalathus, of thy side, and partners in this enterprise?"

"They are not privy to the design to deliver up to thy great power the Queen their mother; but they are my friends, and most surely do I count upon their support. As I shall return king of Palmyra, they will gladly share my power."

"But if friends of thine, they are enemies of mine," rejoined Aurelian, in terrific tones; "they are seeds of future trouble; they may sprout up into kings also, to

Rome's annoyance. They must be crushed. Dost thou understand me ?”

“I do, great Prince. Leave them to me. I will do for them. But to say the truth they are too weak to disturb any—friends or enemies.”

“Escape not so. They must die,” roared Aurelian.

“They shall—they shall,” ejaculated the alarmed Antiochus ; “soon as I am within the walls their heads shall be sent to thee.”

“That now is as I would have it. One thing more thou hast asked—that the fair slave who accompanies thee be spared to thee, to be thy Queen.”

“It was her desire—hers, noble Aurelian, not mine.”

“But didst thou not engage to her as much ?”

“Truly I did. But among princes such words are but politic ones : that is well understood. Kings marry for the state. I would be higher matched ;” and the sensual demon cast his eyes significantly towards the Princess Julia.

“Am I understood ?” continued Antiochus, Aurelian making no response. “The Princess Julia I would raise to the throne.” The monster seemed to dilate to twice his common size, as his mind fed upon the opening glories.

‘Aurelian had turned from him, looking first at his Roman attendants, then at the Queen and Julia—his countenance kindling with some swelling passion.

“Do I understand thee ?” he then said. “I understand thee to say that for the bestowment of the favors and honors thou hast named, thou wilt do the

things thou hast now specifically promised? Is it not so?"

"It is, gracious king."

"Dost thou swear it?"

"I swear it by the great God of Light!"

'The countenance of the Emperor now grew black with as it seemed mingled fury and contempt. Antiochus started, and his cheek paled. A little light reached his thick brain.

"Romans," cried Aurelian, "pardon me for so abusing your ears! And you, our royal captives! I knew not that such baseness lived—still less that it was here. Thou foul stigma upon humanity! Why opens not the earth under thee, but that it loathes and rejects thee! Is a Roman like thee, dost thou think, to reward thy unheard-of treacheries? Thou knowest no more what a Roman is, than what truth and honor are. Soldiers! seize yonder miscreant, write traitor on his back, and spurn him forth the camp. His form and his soul both offend alike. Hence, monster!"

'Antiochus was like one thunderstruck. Trembling in every joint, he sought to appeal to the Emperor's mercy, but the guard stopped his mouth, and dragged him from the tent. His shrieks pierced the air as the soldiers scourged him beyond the encampment.

"It was not for me," said Aurelian, as these ceased to be heard, "to refuse what fate threw into my hands. Though I despise the traitorous informer, I could not shut my ear to the facts he revealed, without myself betraying the interests of Rome. But, believe me, it was information I would willingly have spared. My infamy were as his to have rewarded the traitor.

Fear not, great Queen ; I pledge the word of a Roman and an Emperor for thy safety. Thou art safe both from Roman and Palmyrene."

"What I have but now been witness of," replied the Queen, "assures me that in the magnanimity of Aurelian I may securely rest."

As the Queen uttered these words, a sound as of a distant tumult, and the uproar of a multitude, caught the ears of all within the tent.

"What mean these tumultuous cries?" inquired Aurelian of his attending guard. "They increase and approach."

"It may be but the soldiers at their game with Antiochus," replied Probus.

But it was not so. At the moment a Centurion, breathless, and with his head bare, rushed madly into the tent.

"Speak," said the Emperor, "what is it?"

"The legions!" said the Centurion, as soon as he could command his words, "the legions are advancing, crying out for the Queen of Palmyra! They have broken from their camp and their leaders, and in one mixed body come to surround the Emperor's tent."

As he ended, the fierce cries of the enraged soldiery were distinctly heard, like the roaring of a forest torn by a tempest. Aurelian, baring his sword, and calling upon his friends to do the same, sprang toward the entrance of the tent. They were met by the dense throng of the soldiers, who now pressed against the tent, and whose savage yells now could be heard,—

"The head of Zenobia."—"Deliver the Queen to

our will."—"Throw out the head of Zenobia, and we will return to our quarters."—"She belongs to us."

'At the same moment the sides of the tent were thrown up, showing the whole plain filled with the heaving multitude, and being itself instantly crowded with the ringleaders and their more desperate associates. Zenobia, supporting the Princess, who clung to her, and pale through a just apprehension of every horror, but otherwise firm and undaunted, cried out to Aurelian, "Save us, O Emperor, from this foul butchery!"

"We will die else!" replied the Emperor; who with the word, sprang upon a soldier making toward the Queen, and with a blow clove him to the earth. Then swinging round him that sword which had drunk the blood of thousands, and followed by the gigantic Sandaron, by Probus, and Carus, a space around the Queen was soon cleared.

"Back, ruffians," cried Aurelian, in a voice of thunder, "for you are no longer Romans! back to the borders of the tent. There I will hear your complaints." The soldiers fell back, and their ferocious cries ceased.

"Now," cried the Emperor, addressing them, "what is your will, that thus in wild disorder you throng my tent?"

'One from the crowd replied—"Our will is that the Queen of Palmyra be delivered to us as our right, instantly. Thousands and thousands of our bold companions lie buried upon these accursed plains, slain by her and her fiery engines. We demand her life. It is but justice, and faint justice too."

“Her life!”—“Her life!”—arose in one shout from the innumerable throng.

“The Emperor raised his hand, waving his sword dropping with the blood of the slain soldier; the noise subsided; and his voice, clear and loud like the tone of a trumpet, went to the farthest bounds of the multitude.

“Soldiers,” he cried, “you ask for justice; and justice you shall have.”—“Aurelian is ever just!” cried many voices.—“But you shall not have the life of the Queen of Palmyra.”—He paused; a low murmur went through the crowd.—“Or you must first take the life of your Emperor, and of these who stand with him.”—The soldiers were silent.—“In asking the life of Zenobia,” he continued, “you know not what you ask. Are any here who went with Valerian to the Persian war?” A few voices responded, “I was there,—and I,—and I.”—“Are there any here whose parents, or brothers, or friends fell into the tiger clutches of the barbarian Sapor, and died miserably in hopeless captivity?”—Many voices every where throughout the crowd were heard in reply, “Yes, yes,—Mine were there, and mine.”—“Did you ever hear it said,” continued Aurelian, “that Rome lifted a finger for their rescue, or for that of the good Valerian?”—They were silent, some crying, “No, no.”—“Know then, that when Rome forgot her brave soldiers and her Emperor, Zenobia remembered and avenged them; and Rome fallen into contempt with the Persian, was raised to her ancient renown by the arms of her ally, the brave Zenobia, and her dominions throughout the East saved from the grasp of Sapor only by her valor.

While Gallienus wallowed in sensuality and forgot Rome, and even his own great father, the Queen of Palmyra stood forth, and with her royal husband, the noble Odenatus, was in truth the savior of the empire. And is it her life you would have? Were that a just return? Were that Roman magnanimity? And grant that thousands of your brave companions lie buried upon these plains: it is but the fortune of war. Were they not slain in honorable fight, in the siege of a city, for its defence unequalled in all the annals of war? Cannot Romans honor courage and conduct, though in an enemy? But you ask for justice. I have said you shall have justice. You shall. It is right that the heads and advisers of this revolt, for such the senate deems it, should be cut off. It is the ministers of princes who are the true devisers of a nation's acts. These, when in our power, shall be yours. And now, who, soldiers! stirred up this mutiny, bringing inexpiable shame upon our brave legions? Who are the leaders of the tumult?"

'Enough were found to name them;

"Firmus! Carinus! the Centurions Plancus! Tattius! Burrhus! Valens! Crispinus!"

"Guards! seize them and hew them down. Soldiers! to your tents." The legions fell back as tumultuously as they had come together; the faster, as the dying greans of the slaughtered ringleaders fell upon their ears.

'The tent of the Emperor was once more restored to order. After a brief conversation, in which Aurelian expressed his shame for the occurrence of such disorders in the presence of the Queen, the guard were com-

manded to convey back to the palace of Seleucus, whence they had been taken, Zenobia and the Princess.'

Such are the principal matters contained in the communications of Nichomachus.

When the facts contained in them became known, the senate, the council, the army, and the people, agreed in the belief, that the Queen's safety and their own would now be best secured by an immediate capitulation. Accordingly, heralds bearing letters from Longinus, in the name of the council, proceeded to the Roman camp. No other terms could be obtained than a verbal promise that the city, the walls, and the common people should be spared; but the surrender, beyond that, must be unconditional.

Upon learning the terms prescribed by the conqueror, many were for further resistance. 'The language of Aurelian,' they said, 'is ambiguous. He will spare the city, walls, and common people. Are our senators and counsellors to be sacrificed? Are they, who have borne the burden of the day, now to be selected, as the only ones who are to suffer? It shall not be so.'

Generous sentiments like these were heard on all sides. But they were answered and overcome, by Gracchus especially, and others. Said Gracchus to the people, 'Doubtless punishment will be inflicted by Rome upon some. Our resistance is termed by her, rebellion, revolt, conspiracy; the leaders will be sought and punished. It is ever her course. But this is a light evil compared with a wide-spread massacre of this whole population, the destruction of these famous temples, the levelling of these proud walls. Aurelian

has said that these shall be spared. His word, though an unwritten and informal one, may be trusted. My counsel is, that it be at once accepted. What if a few grey heads among us are taken off? That will not touch the existence or prosperity of Palmyra. You can spare them. Your children will soon grow up to take our places, and fill them, I hope, with a better wisdom.'

But such words only served at first the more to strengthen the people in their resolution, that their rulers should not be the only sacrifice. None were loved throughout the city more than Gracchus and Otho, none revered like Longinus. It was a long and painful struggle between affection and the convictions of reason before it ended, and the consent of the people was obtained to deliver up the city to the mercy of Aurelian. But it was obtained.

I was sitting with Fausta and Calpurnius, speaking of the things that had happened, and of the conduct of the Queen, when Gracchus entered and joined us, informing us that 'ambassadors were now gone to the camp of Aurelian, clothed with authority to deliver up the city into his hands. So that now the end has drawn on, and Palmyra ceases to exist.'

Fausta, although knowing that this must happen, and might at any moment, could not hear the fatal words, announcing the death of her country, as she deemed it, and quenching forever in darkness the bright dreams upon which she had fed so long, without renewed grief. We were a long time silent.

'Something yet remains,' at length Gracchus resumed, 'for us to resolve upon and do. Before many

hours have elapsed, a Roman army will fill the streets of the city, perhaps our houses also, and a general plunder may be commenced of all the valuables we possess. It will be useless to conceal what it will be well enough known, from the manner in which we live, must be beneath our roof. It will but expose our lives. Yet, Fausta, your jewels, valued by you as gifts, and other things precious for the same or a like reason, may easily be secreted, nor yet be missed by the licensed robbers. See to this, my child; but except this there is now naught to do concerning such affairs, but to sit still and observe the general wreck. But there are other and weightier matters to be decided upon, and that at once.'

'Concerning the care of ourselves, you mean?' said Fausta.

'I do,' replied Gracchus.

'I,' said Fausta, 'would remain here, where I am.'

'It is that which I wish,' replied her father. 'I commit you to the care of Lucius. For Calpurnius, he must leave you, and as he would live, fly if that yet be possible beyond the walls, or conceal himself within them.'

'Never!' said Calpurnius; 'I can do neither. I have never shunned a danger—and I cannot.'

'Let pride and passion now,' said Gracchus, 'go fast asleep. We have no occasion for them; they are out of place, dealing as we now do with stern necessities. Your life will be especially sought by Aurelian; it is a life that cannot be spared. Fausta needs you. In you she must find, or nowhere, father, husband, friend. Lucius, when these troubles are over, will return to

Rome, and I shall be in the keeping of Aurelian. You must live ; for her sake, if not for your own.'

'For mine too, surely, if for hers,' replied Calpurnius.

'Father,' said Fausta, throwing her arms around him, 'why, why must you fall into the hands of Aurelian ? Why not, with Calpurnius, fly from these now hated walls ?'

'My daughter !' replied Gracchus, 'let not your love of me make you forgetful of what I owe my own name and our country's. Am I not bound by the words of Aurelian ?—"He will spare the city and the common people"—reserving for himself their rulers and advisers. Were they all to fly or shrink into concealment, can we doubt that then the fury of the fierce Roman would discharge itself upon the helpless people, and men, women and children suffer in our stead ? And shall I fly while the rest are true to their trust ?'

'The gods forbid !' sobbed Fausta.

'Now you are yourself again. Life is of little account with me. For you I would willingly hold on upon it, though in any event my grasp would be rapidly growing weaker and weaker ; age would come and weaken and dissolve it. But for myself, I can truly say, I survey the prospect of death with indifference. Life is one step ; death is another. I have taken the first, I am as ready to take the second. But to preserve life, agreeable as I have found it, by any sacrifice—'

'O, that were dying twice !' said Fausta ; 'I know it.'

'Be thankful then that I shall die but once, and so dry your tears. Of nothing am I more clear, than that if the loss of my head will bring security to the city and the people, I can offer it to the executioner with

scarce a single regret. But let us leave this. But few hours remain to do what is yet to be done.'

It was so indeed. Already the commotion in the streets indicated that the entrance of the Roman army was each moment expected.

It was determined that Calpurnius should avail himself of the old conduit, and fly beyond the walls. To this he consented, though with pain; and bidding us farewell, departed. Fausta retired to fulfil the injunctions of her father, while Gracchus employed himself in arranging a few papers, to be entrusted to my keeping.

In the course of a few hours the gates of the city were thrown open, and the army of the conqueror made its unobstructed entrance. Soon as the walls were secured, the towers of the gates, and the arms of the Queen's remaining forces, Aurelian himself approached, and by the Roman gate passed into a city that had cost him so dear to gain. He rode through its principal streets and squares, gazing with admiration at the magnificence which every where met his view. As he arrived at the far-famed Temple of the Sun, and was told to what deity it was dedicated, he bared his head, flung himself from his horse, and on foot, followed by an innumerable company of Romans, ascended its long flight of steps, and there within its walls returned solemn thanks to the great God of Light, the protecting deity of his house, for the success that had crowned his arms.

When this act of worship had been performed, and votive offerings had been hung upon the columns of the temple, the Emperor came forth, and after visiting and

inspecting all that was beautiful and rare, made proclamation of his will concerning the city and its inhabitants. This was, that all gold and silver, precious stones, all pictures, statues, and other works of art, were to be placed in the hands of the Romans, and that all the members of the Queen's senate and council, with the nobility, were to be delivered up as prisoners of war, together with certain specified portions of the army. Beyond these requisitions, the persons and property of the citizens were to be respected. No violence of any kind on the part of the soldiers would be allowed, or pardoned if committed.

Immediately upon this, the Roman army was converted into a body of laborers and artisans, employed in the construction of wains of every form and size, for the transportation across the desert to the sea-coast, of whatever would adorn the triumph of Aurelian, or add to the riches of the great capital of the world. Vast numbers of elephants and camels were collected from the city, and from all the neighboring territory, with which to drag the huge and heavy loaded wagons through the deep sands and over the rough and rocky plains of Syria. The palaces of the nobles and the wealthy merchants have been stripped of every embellishment of art and taste. The private and public gardens, the fountains, the porticos, have each and all been robbed of every work, in either marble or brass, which had the misfortune or the merit to have been wrought by artists of distinguished names. The palaces of the Queen and of Longinus were objects of especial curiosity and desire, and, as it were, their entire contents, after being secured with utmost art

from possibility of injury, have been piled upon carriages prepared for them, ready for their journey toward Rome. It was pitiful to look on and see this wide desolation of scenes, that so little while ago had offered to the eye all that the most cultivated taste could have required for its gratification. The citizens stood around in groups, silent witnesses of the departing glories of their city and nation.

But the sight saddest of all to behold, was that of the senators and counsellors of Palmyra, led guarded from the city to the camp of Aurelian. All along the streets through which they passed, the people stood in dumb and motionless array, to testify in that expressive manner their affection and their grief. Voices were indeed occasionally heard invoking the blessings of the gods upon them, or imprecating curses upon the head of the scourge Aurelian. Whenever Longinus and Gracchus appeared, their names were uttered in the tones with which children would cry out to venerated parents, whom they beheld for the last time; beheld borne away from them by a power they could not resist to captivity or death. No fear of the legion that surrounded them availed to repress or silence such testimonies of regard. And if confidence was reposed in the Roman soldiery, that they would not, because conquerors and the power was theirs, churlishly deny them the freedom to relieve in that manner their overburdened hearts, it was not—happy was I, as a Roman, to witness it—misplaced. They resented it not either by word or look or act, but moved on like so many statues in mail, turning neither to the one hand nor the other, nor apparently so much as hearing the re-

proaches which were by some lavished upon them and their Emperor.

Livia, Faustula, and the other inmates of the palace have joined Zenobia and Julia, by order of Aurelian, at the house of Seleucus. The Cæsars, Herennianus and Timolaus, have fled or concealed themselves; Vabalathus has surrendered himself, and has accompanied the princesses to the Roman camp.

How desolate is the house of Gracchus, deprived of its princely head!—especially as the mind cannot help running forward and conjecturing the fate which awaits him. Fausta surrenders herself to her grief—loss of country and of parent, at one and the same moment, is loss too great for her to bear with fortitude. Her spirit, so alive to affection and every generous sentiment, is almost broken by these sorrows and disappointments. I did not witness the parting between her and Gracchus, and happy am I that I did not. Her agony was in proportion to her love and her sensibility. I have not met her since. She remains within her own apartments, seen only by her favorite slaves. A double darkness spreads around while Fausta too is withdrawn.

It appeared to me now, my Curtius, as if something might be done on my part in behalf of Gracchus. According to the usages of Rome, the chief persons among the prisoners, and who might be considered as the leaders of the rebellion, I knew would die either at once, or at farthest, when Aurelian should re-enter Rome as the conqueror of the East. I considered that by reason of the growing severity of the Emperor toward all, friends as well as foes—amounting, as many

now deem, to cruelty—the danger to Gracchus was extreme, beyond any power perhaps to avert. Yet I remembered, at the same time, the generous traits in Aurelian's character; his attachment toward old friends; his gratitude for services rendered him in the early part of his life, while making his way up through the lower posts of the army. It seemed to me that he was open to solicitation; that he would not refuse to hear me—a friend—the son of Cneius Piso—with what object soever I might present myself before him: and that, consequently, there was from this quarter a ray of hope, however small, for the father of our beloved Fausta.

Accordingly, so soon as the affairs at first calling for the entire devotion of Aurelian were through, and I knew that his leisure would allow of an interruption, I sought the Roman camp, and asked an audience of the Emperor. It was immediately granted.

As I entered his tent, Aurelian was seated at a table holding in his hand a parchment scroll, which he seemed intently considering. His stern countenance lowered over it like a thunder-cloud. I stood there where I had entered a few moments before he seemed aware of the presence of any one. His eye then falling almost accidentally upon me, he suddenly rose, and with the manner of his ancient friendship warmly greeted me.

‘I am glad,’ said he, ‘to meet so true a Roman in these distant parts.’

‘I am still a true Roman,’ I replied, ‘notwithstanding I have been, during this siege, upon the side of the enemy.’

‘I doubt it not. I am not ignorant of the causes that led you to Palmyra, and have detained you there: Henceforward your Roman blood must be held of the purest, for as I learn, and since I have seen can believe, they are few who have come within the magic circle of the late Queen, who have not lost their name and freedom—themselves fastening on the chains of her service.’

‘You have heard truly. Her court and camp are filled with those who at first perhaps sought her capital, as visitors of curiosity or traffic, but being once within the marvellous influence of her presence, have remained there her friends or servants. She is irresistible.’

‘And well nigh so in war too. In Rome they make themselves merry at my expense, inasmuch as I have been warring thus with a woman—not a poet in the garrets of the Via Cœli, but has entertained the city with his couplets upon the invincible Aurelian, beset here in the East by an army of women, who seem likely to subdue him by their needles or their charms. Nay, the Senate looks on and laughs. By the immortal gods! they know not of what they speak. Julius Cæsar himself, Piso, never displayed a better genius than this woman. Twice have I saved my army but by stratagem. I give the honor of those days to Zenobia. It belongs to her rather than to me. Palmyra may well boast of Antioch and Emesa. Your brother did her good service there. I trust, for your sake and for mine, he will not fall into my hands.’

That dark and cruel frown, which marks Aurelian, grew above and around his eyes.

'I never,' he continued, 'forgive a traitor to his country.'

'Yet,' I ventured to say, 'surely the circumstances of his captivity, and long abandonment, may plead somewhat in extenuation of his fault.'

'Never. His crime is beyond the reach of pardon.'

Aurelian had evidently supposed that I came to seek favor for Calpurnius. But this I had not intended to do, as Calpurnius had long ago resolved never again to dwell within the walls of Rome. I then opened the subject of my visit.

'I have come,' I said, 'not to seek the pardon of Calpurnius Piso. Such, to my grief, is his hostility toward Rome, that he would neither seek nor accept mercy at her hands. He has forsworn his country, and never willingly will set foot within her borders. He dwells henceforward in Asia. But there is another—'

'You would speak of Gracchus. It cannot be. Longinus excepted, he is the first citizen of Palmyra. If the Queen be spared, these must suffer. It is due to the army, and to justice, and to vengeance. The soldiers have clamored for the blood of Zenobia, and it has been at no small cost that her and her daughter's life have been redeemed. But I have sworn it, they shall live; my blood shall flow before theirs. Zenobia has done more for Rome than many an Emperor. Besides, I would that Rome should see with her own eyes who it is has held even battle with Roman legions so long, that they may judge me to have had a worthy antagonist. She must grace my triumph.'

'I truly thank the gods,' I said, 'that it is so resolv-

ed! Fortune has placed me, while in her dominions, near the Queen, and though a Roman, I have come to love and revere her even like a Palmyrene. Would that the like clemency might be shown toward Gracchus! There is no greatness like mercy.'

'I may not, noble Piso, win glory to myself at the cost of Rome. On the field of battle I and Rome win together. In pardoning her enemies fallen into my power, I may indeed crown myself with the praise of magnanimity in the eye of the world, while by the same act I wound my country. No rebellion is quelled, till the heads that moved and guided it are off—off. Who is ignorant that Longinus, that subtle Greek, has been the master-spring in this great revolt? and hand and hand with him Gracchus? Well should I deserve the gibes and sneers of the Roman mob, if I turned my back upon the great work I have achieved, leaving behind me spirits like these to brew fresh trouble. Nor, holding to this as it may seem to you harsh decision, am I forgetful, Piso, of our former friendship; nor of the helping hand often stretched out to do me service of Cneius Piso, your great parent. I must trust in this to your generosity or justice, to construe me aright. Fidelity to Rome must come before private friendship, or even gratitude. Am I understood?'

'I think so.'

'Neither must you speak to me of Longinus the learned Greek—the accomplished scholar—the great philosopher. He has thrown aside the scholar and the philosopher in putting on the minister. He is to me known only as the Queen's chief adviser; Palmyra's strength; the enemy of Rome. As such he has been

arrayed against me; as such he has fallen a prisoner into my hands; as such he must feel the sword of the Roman executioner. Gracchus—I would willingly for thy sake, Piso, spare him—the more, as I hear thou art betrothed to his far-famed daughter, she who upon the fields of Antioch and Emesa filled with amazement even Roman soldiers.'

To say that instead of me it was Calpurnius to whom she was betrothed, would seem to have sealed the fate of Gracchus at the moment there was a gleam of hope. I only said,

'She was the life of the Queen's army. She falls but little below her great mistress.'

'I believe it. These women of Palmyra are the true wonder of the age. When for the first time I found myself before Zenobia and her daughter, it is no shame for me to confess that it was hard for the moment to believe myself Aurelian and conqueror. I was ready to play the subject; I scarce kept myself from an oriental prostration. Never, Piso, was such beauty seen in Rome. Rome now has an Empress worthy of her—unless a Roman Emperor may sue in vain. Think you not with me? You have seen the Princess Julia?'

You can pity me, Curtius and Lucilia. I said only,

'I have. Her beauty is rare indeed, but by many, nay by most, her sister, the Princess Livia, is esteemed before her.'

'Hah! Nay, but that cannot be. The world itself holds not another like the elder Princess, much less the same household.' He seemed as if he would have added more, but his eye fell upon the scroll before him,

and it changed the current of his thoughts and the expression of his countenance, which again grew dark as when I first entered the tent. He muttered over as to himself the names of 'Gracchus,' 'Fausta,' 'the very life of their cause,' 'the people's chief trust,' and other broken sentences of the same kind. He then suddenly recommenced :

'Piso, I know not that even I have power to grant thy suit. I have saved, with some hazard, the life of the Queen and her daughter ; in doing it I promised to the soldiers, in their place, the best blood of Palmyra, and theirs it is by right. It will not be easy to wrest Gracchus from their hands. It will bring danger to myself, to the Queen, and to the empire. It may breed a fatal revolt. But, Piso, for the noble Portia's sake, the living representative of Cneius Piso my early friend, for thine, and chiefly for the reason that thou art affianced to the warlike daughter of the princely Palmyrene—'

'Great Prince,' said I—for it was now my turn to speak,—'pardon me that I break in upon your speech, but I cannot by a deception, however slight and unintentional, purchase the life even of a friend.'

'To what does this tend ?'

'It is not I who am affianced to the daughter of Gracchus, but Calpurnius Piso my brother and the enemy of Rome. If my hope for Gracchus rests but where you have placed it, it must be renounced. Rumor has dealt falsely with you.'

'I am sorry for it. You know me, Piso, well enough to believe me—I am sorry for it. That plea would have availed me more than any. Yet it is right that

he should die. It is the custom of war. The legions clamor for his death—it has been promised—it is due to justice and revenge. Piso, he must die!’

I however did not cease to importune. As Aurelian had spoken of Portia, I too spoke of her, and refrained not from bringing freshly before his memory the characters of both my parents, and especially the services of my father. The Emperor was noways displeased, but on the contrary, as I recurred to the early periods of his career, when he was a Centurion in Germany, under tutelage to the experienced Cneius Piso, he himself took up the story, and detained me long with the history of his life and actions, while serving with and under my father—and then afterward when in Gaul, in Africa, and in the East. Much curious narrative, the proper source of history, I heard from the great actor himself, during this long interview. It was terminated by the entrance of Sandarion, upon pressing business with the Emperor, whereupon I withdrew, Gracchus not being again named, but leaving his fate in the hands of the master of the world, and yet—how often has it been so with our Emperors—the slave of his own soldiers. I returned to the city.

The following day I again saw Fausta—now pale, melancholy and silent. I told her of my interview with Aurelian, and of its doubtful issue. She listened to me with a painful interest, as if wishing a favorable result, yet not daring to hope. When I had ended, she said,

‘You have done all, Lucius, that can be done, yet it avails little or nothing. Would that Aurelian had thought women worthy his regard so much as to have

made me a prisoner too. I can now feel how little one may fear death, dying in a certain cause. Palmyra is now dead, and I care no more for life. And if Gracchus is to die too, how much rather would I die with him, than live without him. And this is not as it may seem, infidelity to Calpurnius. I love him better than I ever thought to have loved anything beside Palmyra and Gracchus. But my love for these is from my infancy, and is in reason stronger than the other. The gods make it so, not I. I love Calpurnius with all that is left. When does the army depart ?

‘To-morrow, as I learn. I shall follow it to Emesa, for it is there, so it is reported, that the fate of the prisoners will be decided.’

‘Do so, Lucius, and by bribery, cunning, or force, find your way to the presence of Gracchus. Be not denied. Tell him—but no, you knew what I would say ; I cannot—’ and a passionate flood of tears came to her relief.

The preparations of the army are now completed. The city has been drained of its wealth and its embellishments. Scarce anything is left but the walls and buildings, which are uninjured, the lives and the industry of the inhabitants. Sandarion is made Governor of the city and province, with, as it seems to me, a very incompetent force to support his authority. Yet the citizens are, as they have been since the day the contest was decided, perfectly peaceable—nay, I rather should say, stupid and lethargic. There appear to be on the part of Aurelian no apprehensions of future disturbance.

I have stood upon the walls and watched till the last

of the Romans has disappeared beyond the horizon. Two days have been spent in getting into motion and beyond the precincts of the city and suburbs, the army with its innumerable wagons—its long trains of elephants, and camels, and horses. Not only Palmyra, but the whole East, seems to have taken its departure for the Mediterranean. For the carriages were hardly to be numbered which have borne away for the Roman amphitheatres wild animals of every kind, collected from every part of Asia, together with innumerable objects of curiosity and works of art.

LETTER XVI.

I WRITE to you, Curtius, as from my last you were doubtless led to expect, from Emesa, a Syrian town of some consequence, filled now to overflowing with the Roman army. Here Aurelian reposes for a while, after the fatigues of the march across the desert, and here justice is to be inflicted upon the leaders of the late revolt, as by Rome it is termed.

The prisons are crowded with the great, and noble, and good, of Palmyra. All those with whom I have for the last few months mingled so much, whose hospitality I have shared, whose taste, accomplishments, and elegant displays of wealth I have admired, are now here immured in dungeons, and awaiting that death which their virtues, not their vices nor their crimes, have drawn upon them. For I suppose it will be agreed, that if ever mankind do that which claims the name and rank of virtue, it is when they freely offer up their lives for their country, and for a cause which, whatever may be their misjudgment in the case, they believe to be the cause of liberty. Man is then greater in his disinterestedness, in the spirit with which he renounces himself, and offers his neck to the axe of the executioner, than he can be clothed in any robe of honor, or sitting upon any throne of power. Which is greater in the present instance, Longinus, Gracchus, Otho—or Aurelian—I cannot doubt for a moment;

although I fear that you, Curtius, were I to declare my opinion, would hardly agree with me. Strange that such a sacrifice as this which is about to be made, can be thought to be necessary ! It is not necessary ; nor can Aurelian himself in his heart deem it so. It is a peace-offering to the blood-thirsty legions, who, well do I know it—for I have been of them—love no sight so well as the dying throes of an enemy. It is, I am told, with an impatience hardly to be restrained within the bounds of discipline, that they wait for the moment, when their eyes shall be feasted with the flowing blood and headless trunks of the brave defenders of Palmyra. I see that this is so, whenever I pass by a group of soldiers, or through the camp. Their conversation seems to turn upon nothing else than the vengeance due to them upon those who have thinned their ranks of one half their numbers, and who, themselves shielded by their walls, looked on and beheld in security the slaughter which they made. They cry out for the blood of every Palmyrene brought across the desert. My hope for Gracchus is small ; not more, however, because of this clamor of the legions, than on account of the stern and almost cruel nature of Aurelian himself. He is himself a soldier. He is one of the legions. His sympathies are with them, one of whom he so long has been, and from whom he sprang. The gratifications which he remembers himself so often to have sought and so dearly to have prized, he is willing to bestow upon those who he knows feel as he once did. He may speak of his want of power to resist the will of the soldiers ; but I almost doubt his sincerity, since nothing can equal the terror and reverence with

which he is regarded throughout the army ; reverence for his genius, terror for his passions, which, when excited, rage with the fury of a madman, and wreak themselves upon all upon whom the least suspicion falls, though among his most trusted friends. To this terror, as you well know, his bodily strength greatly adds.

It was my first office to seek the presence of Gracchus. I found, upon inquiry, that both he and Longinus were confined in the same prison, and in the charge of the same keeper. I did not believe that I should experience difficulty in gaining admission to them, and I found it so.

Applying to the jailer for admittance to Gracchus the Palmyrene, I was told that but few were allowed to see him, and such only whose names had been given him. Upon giving him my name, he said that it was one which was upon his list, and I might enter. 'Make the most of your time,' he added, 'for to-morrow is the day set for the general execution.'

'So soon?' I said.

'Aye,' he replied, 'and that is scarce soon enough to keep the soldiers quiet. Since they have lost the Queen, they are suspicious lest the others, or some of them, may escape too,—so that they are well guarded, I warrant you.'

'Is the Queen,' I asked, 'under your guard, and within the same prison?'

'The Queen?' he rejoined, and lowering his tone, added, 'she is far enough from here. If others know it not, I know that she is well on her way to Rome. She has let too much Roman blood for her safety within

reach of Roman swords, I can tell you—Aurelian notwithstanding. That butchery of the Centurions did neither any good.'

'You say to-morrow is the day appointed for the execution?'

'So I said. But you will scarce believe it when you see the prisoners. They seem rather as if they were for Rome upon a journey of pleasure, than so soon for the axe. But walk in. And when you would be let out, make a signal by drawing the cord which you will find within the inner ward.'

I passed in, and meeting another officer of the prison, was by him shown the door that led to the cell of Gracchus, and the cord by which I was to make the necessary signal.

I unbarred the door and entered. Gracchus, who was pacing to and fro in his apartment, upon seeing who his visiter was, greeted me in his cordial, cheerful way. His first inquiry was,

'Is Fausta well?'

'I left her well; well as her grief would allow her to be.'

'My room is narrow, Piso, but it offers two seats. Let us sit. This room is not our hall in Palmyra, nor the banqueting room—this window is too small—nay, it is in some sort but a crevice—and this ceiling is too low—and these webs of the spider, the prisoner's friend, are not our purple hangings—but it might all be worse. I am free of chains, I can walk the length of my room and back again, and there is light enough from our chink to see a friend's face by. Yet far as these things are from worst, I trust not to be annoyed

or comforted by them long. You have done kindly, Pinc, to seek me out thus remote from Palmyra, and death will be lighter for your presence. I am glad to see you.'

'I could not, as you may easily suppose, remain in Palmyra, and you here and thus. For Fausta's sake and my own, I must be here. Although I should not speak a word, nor you, there is a happiness in being near and in seeing.'

'There is. Confinement for a long period of time were robbed of much of its horror, if there were near you but a single human countenance, and that a stranger's, upon which you might look, especially if you might read there pity and affection. Then if this countenance should be that of one known and beloved, it would be almost like living in society, even though speech were prohibited. Tyrants know this—these walls are the proof of it. Aurelian is not a tyrant in this sense. He is not without magnanimity. Are you here with his knowledge?'

'By his express provision. The jailer had been furnished with my name. You are right surely, touching the character of Aurelian. Though rude and unlettered, and severe almost to cruelty, there are generous sentiments within which shed a softening light, if inconstant, upon the darker traits. I would conceal nothing from you, Gracchus; as I would do nothing without your approbation. I know your indifference to life. I know that you would not purchase a day by any unworthy concession, by any doubtful act or word. Relying with some confidence upon the generosity of Aurelian—'

‘Why, Lucius, so hesitating and indirect? You would say that you have appealed to Aurelian for my life—and that hope is not extinct in your mind of escape from this appointed death.’

‘That is what I would say. The Emperor inclines to spare your life, but wavers. Shall I seek another interview with him? And is there any argument which you would that I should urge?—or—would you rather that I should forbear? It is, Gracchus, because I feared lest I had been doing you a displeasing and undesired service, that I have now spoken.’

‘Piso, it is the simple truth when I say that I anticipate the hour and the moment of death with the same indifference and composure that I do any, the most common event. I have schooled myself to patience. Acquiescence in the will of the gods—if gods there are—or which is the same thing, in the order of events, is the temper which, since I have reflected at all, I have cultivated, and to which I can say I have fully attained. I throw myself upon the current of life, unresisting, to be wafted withersoever it will. I look with desire neither to this shore nor the opposite, to one port nor another, but wherever I am borne and permitted to act, I straightway find there and in that my happiness. Not that one allotment is not in itself preferable to another, but that there being so much of life over which man has no control, and cannot, if he would, secure his felicity, I think it wiser to renounce all action and endeavor concerning it—receiving what is sent or happens with joy if it be good, without complaint if it be evil. In this manner have I secured an inward calm, which has been as a fountain of life.

My days, whether they have been dark ones or bright, as others term them, have flowed along a smooth and even current. Under misfortune, I believe I have enjoyed more from this my inward frame, than many a son of prosperity has in the very height of his glory. That which so disturbs the peace of multitudes—even of philosophers—the prospect of death, has occasioned me not one moment's disquiet. It is true, I know not what it is—do I know what life is?—but that is no reason why I should fear it. One thing I know, which is this, that it will come, as it comes to all, and that I cannot escape it. It may take me where it will, I shall be content. If it be but a change, and I live again elsewhere, I shall be glad, especially if I am then exempt from evils in my condition which assail me here; if it be extinction of being, it will but resemble those nights when I sleep without dreaming—it will not yield any delights, but it will not bring affright nor torment. I desire not to entertain, and I do not entertain either hope or fear. I am passive. My will is annihilated. The object of my life has been to secure the greatest amount of pleasure—that being the best thing of which we can conceive. This I have done by acting right. I have found happiness, or that which we agree to call so, in acting in accordance with that part of my nature which prescribes the lines of duty: not in any set of philosophical opinions; not in expectations in futurity; not in any fancies or dreams; but in the substantial reality of virtuous action. I have sought to treat both myself and others in such a way, that afterward I should not hear from either a single word of reproach. In this way of life I have for the

most part succeeded, as any one can who will apply his powers as he may if he will. I have at this hour, which it may be is the last of my life, no complaints to make or hear against myself. So too in regard to others. At least I know not that there is one living whom I have wronged, and to whom I owe the least reparation. Now therefore by living in the best manner for this life on earth, I have prepared myself in the best manner for death, and for another life, if there be one. If there be none—still what I have enjoyed I have enjoyed, and it has been more than any other manner of life could have afforded. So that in any event, I am like a soldier armed at all points. To me, Piao, to die is no more than to go on to live. Both are events : to both I am alike indifferent ; I know nothing about either. As for the pain of death, it is not worthy a moment's thought, even if it were considerable but it appears to me that it is not. I have many times witnessed it, and it has ever seemed that death, so far from being represented by any word signifying pain, would be better expressed by one that should stand for insensibility. The nearer death the nearer apathy. There is pain which often precedes it, in various forms of sickness ; but this is sickness, not death. Such pains we often endure and recover ; worse often than apparently are endured by those who die.'

'I perceive then, Gracchus, that I have given you neither pain nor pleasure by any thing I have done.'

'Not that exactly. It has given me pleasure that you have sought to do me a service. For myself, it will weigh but little whether you succeed or fail. Your intercession has not displeased me. It cannot affect

my good name. For Fausta's sake—' at her name he paused as if for strength—' and because she wishes it, I would rather live than die. Otherwise my mind is even-poised, inclining neither way.'

'But would it not afford you, Gracchus, a sensible pleasure, if, supposing you are now to die, you could anticipate with certainty a future existence? You are now, you say, in a state of indifference, as to life or death? Above all you are delivered from all apprehensions concerning death and futurity. This is, it cannot be denied, a great felicity. You are able to sit here calm and composed. But it seems to me, if you were possessed of a certain expectation of immortality, you would be very much animated and transported, as it were, with the prospect of the wonderful scenes so soon to be revealed. If, with such a belief, you could turn back your eye upon as faultless and virtuous a life as you have passed, you would cast it forward with feelings far from those of indifference.'

'What you assert is very true: doubtless it would be as you say. I can conceive that death may be approached not only with composure, but with a bursting impatience; just as the youthful traveller pants to leap from the vessel that bears him to a foreign land. This would be the case if we were as secure of another and happier life as we are certain that we live now. In future ages, perhaps through the discoveries of reason, perhaps by disclosures from superior beings, it may be so universally, and death come to be regarded even with affection, as the great deliverer and rewarder. But at present it is very different; I have found no evidence to satisfy me in any of the systems of ancient

or modern philosophers, from Pythagoras to Seneca, and our own Longinus, either of the existence of a God, or of the reality of a future life. It seems to me oftentimes in certain frames of mind, but they are transient, as if both were true; they feel true, but that is all. I find no evidence beyond this inward feeling at all complete and sufficient; and this feeling is nothing, it is of the nature of a dream, I cannot rely upon it. So that I have, as I still judge, wisely intrenched myself behind indifference. I have never indulged in idle lamentations over evils that could not be removed, nor do I now. Submission is the law of my life, the sum of my philosophy.'

'The Christians,' I here said, 'seem to possess that which all so much desire, a hope, amounting to a certain expectation, of immortality. They all, so I am informed, the poor and the humble, as well as the rich and the learned, live while they live, as feeling themselves to be only passengers here, and when they die, die as those who pass from one stage of a journey to another. To them death loses its character of death, and is associated rather in their minds with life. It is a beginning rather than an ending; a commencement, not a consummation; being born, not dying.'

'So I have heard; but I have never considered their doctrine. The Christian philosophy or doctrine is almost the only one of all, which lay claim to such distinction, that I have not studied. I have been repelled from that I suppose by seeing it in so great proportion the property of the vulgar. What they so rejoiced in, it has appeared to me, could not at the same time be what would yield me either pleasure or wisdom. At

least in other things the vulgar and the refined seek their knowledge and their pleasures from very different sources. I cannot conceive of the same philosophy approving itself to both classes. Do you learn, Piso, when the time for the execution of the prisoners is appointed ?'

'To-morrow, as I heard from the jailer.'

'To-morrow. It is well. Yet I marvel that the jailer told not me. I am somewhat more concerned to know the hour than you, yet to you he has imparted what he has withheld from me. He is a partial knave. Have you yet seen Longinus ?'

'I have not, but shall visit him in the morning.'

'Do so. He will receive you with pleasure. Tell me if he continues true in his affections for the Queen. His is a great trial, laboring, as at first he did, to turn her from the measures that have come to this end ; now dying, because at last, out of friendship for her rather than anything else, he espoused her cause. Yet it is almost the same with me. And for myself, the sweetest feeling of this hour is, that I die for Zenobia, and that perhaps my death is in part the sacrifice that spares her. Incomparable woman ! how the hearts of those who have known thee are bound to thee, so that thy very errors and faults are esteemed to be virtues !'

Our conversation here ended, and I turned from the prison, resolved to seek the presence of Aurelian. I did so. He received me with urbanity as before, but neither confirmed my hopes nor my fears. I returned again to the cell of Gracchus, with whom, in various, and to me most instructive conversation, we passed the remainder of the day.

In the morning, with a spirit heavy and sad, burdened indeed with a grief such as I never before had experienced, I turned to seek the apartment of Longinus. It was not far from that of Gracchus. The keeper of the prison readily admitted me, saying, 'that free intercourse was allowed the prisoners with all whom it was their desire to see, and that there were several friends of Longinus already with him.' With these words he let fall a heavy bar, and the door of the cell creaked upon its hinges.

The room into which I passed seemed a dungeon, rather than any thing else or better, for the only light it had, came from a small barred window far above the reach. Longinus was seated near a massy central column, to which he was bound by a chain; his friends were around him, with whom he appeared to have been engaged in earnest conversation. He rose as I approached him, and saluted me with the grace that is natural to him, and which is expressive, not more of his high breeding, than of an inward benevolence that goes forth and embraces all who draw near him.

'Although,' said he, 'I am forsaken of that which men call fortune, yet I am not forgotten by my friends. So that the best things remain. Piso, I rejoice truly to see you. These whom you behold are pupils and friends whom you have often met at my house, if this dim light will allow you to distinguish them.'

'My eyes are not yet so used to darkness as to see with much distinctness, but I recognise well-known faces.'

After mutual salutations, Longinus said, 'Let me

now first inquire concerning the daughter of Gracchus, that bright emanation of the Deity. I trust in the gods she is well !'

'I left her,' I replied, 'overwhelmed by sorrow. To lose at once country, parent, and friends, is loss too great I fear for her. Death to Gracchus will be death also to her.'

'The temper of Fausta is too sanguine, her heart too warm : she was designed for a perpetual prosperity. The misfortunes that overtake her friends she makes more than her own. Others' sufferings—her own she could bear—falling upon her so thickly, will, if they leave her life, impart a lasting bitterness to it. It were better perhaps that she died with us. Gracchus you have found altogether Gracchus ?'

'I have. He is in the prison as he was in his own palace. His thoughts will sometimes wander to his daughter—oftener than he would—and then in the mirror of the face you behold the inward sorrow of the heart, but it is only a momentary ruffling of the surface, and straightway it is calm again. Except this only, and he sits upon his hard seat in the same composure as if at the head of the Senate.'

'Gracchus,' said Longinus in reply, 'is naturally great ; he is a giant ! the ills of life, the greater and the lesser, which assail and subdue so many, can make nothing of him. He is impenetrable, immovable. Then he has aided nature by the precepts of philosophy. What he wanted of insensibility to evil, he has added from a doctrine, to which he himself clings tenaciously, to which he refers and will refer, as the spring of his highest felicity, but from which I—so variously are we

constituted—shrink with unfeigned horror. Doubtless you all know what it is ?’

‘ We do.’

‘ I grant it thus much ; that it steels the mind against pain ; that it is unrivalled in its power to sear and harden the soul ; and that if it were man’s common lot to be exposed to evil, and evil chiefly, it were a philosophy to be greatly coveted. But it is benumbing, deadening in its influences. It oppresses the soul and overlays it ; it delivers it by rendering it insensible, not by imparting a new principle of vitality beyond the reach of earthly ill. It does the same service that a stupifying draught does to him who is about to submit to the knife of the surgeon, or the axe of the executioner. But is it not nobler to meet such pains fortified in no other way than by a resolute purpose to bear them as well as the nature the gods have given you will allow ? And suppose you shrink or give signs of suffering ? that does not impeach the soul. It is rather the gods themselves who cry out through you : you did not ; it was your corporeal nature, something beside your proper self. It is to be no subject of humiliation to us, or of grief, that when the prospect of acute suffering is before us ; or, still more, when called to endure it, we give many tokens of a keen sensibility ; so it be that at the same time we remain unshaken in our principles, and ready to bear what we must.’

‘ And what,’ asked the young Cleoras, a favorite disciple of the philosopher, ‘ is it in your case that enables you to meet misfortune and death without shrinking ? If you take not shelter behind indifference, what other shield do you find to be sufficient ?’

‘I know,’ said Longinus, ‘that you ask this question not because you have never heard from me virtually at least its answer, but because you wish to hear from me at this hour, whether I adhere with firmness to the principles I have ever inculcated, respecting death, and whether I myself derive from them the satisfactions I have declared them capable to impart. It is right and well that you do so. And I on my part take pleasure in repeating and re-affirming what I have maintained and taught. But I must be brief in what I say, more so than I have been in replying to your other inquiries, Cleoras and Bassus, for I perceive by the manner in which the rays of the sun shoot through the bars of the window, that it is not long before the executioner will make his appearance. It affords me then, I say, a very especial satisfaction, to declare in the presence of so many worthy friends, my continued attachment and hearty devotion to the truths I have believed and taught, concerning the existence of a God, and the reality of a future and immortal life. Upon these two great points I suffer from no serious doubts, and it is from this belief that I now derive the serenity and peace which you witness. All the arguments which you have often heard from me in support of them, now seem to me to be possessed of a greater strength than ever—I will not repeat them, for they are too familiar to you, but only re-affirm them, and pronounce them, as in my judgment, affording a ground for our assurance in the department of moral demonstration, as solid and sufficient as the reasonings of Euclid afford in the science of geometry. I believe in a supreme God and sovereign ruler of the world, by whose wisdom and

power all things and beings have been created, and are sustained, and in whose presence I live and enjoy, as implicitly as I believe the fifth proposition of Euclid's first book. I believe in a future life with the like strength. It is behind these truths, Cleoras, that I entrench myself at this hour; these make the shield which defends me from the assaults of fear and despair, that would otherwise, I am sure, overwhelm me.'

'But how do they defend you, Longinus,' asked Cleoras—'by simply rendering you inaccessible to the shafts which are directed against you, or by any other and higher operation upon the soul?'

'Were it only,' replied the philosopher, 'that truth made me insensible and indifferent, I should pray rather to be left to the tutelage of nature. I both despise and abhor doctrines that can do no more than this. I desire to bless the gods that the philosophy I have received and taught has performed for me a far more essential service. This elevates and expands: it renders nature as it were superior to itself and its condition: it causes the soul to assert its entire supremacy over its companion, the body, and its dwelling-place the earth, and in the perfect possession of itself to inhabit a better world of its own creation: it infinitely increases all its sensibilities, and adds to the constitution received from nature, what may be termed new senses, so vividly does it come to apprehend things, which to those who are unenlightened by this excellent truth, are as if they had no existence, their minds being invested with no faculty or power whereby to discern and esteem them. So far from carrying those who embrace it farther toward insensibility and indifference, which may truly

be called a kind of death, it renders them intensely alive, and it is through the transforming energies of this new life that the soul is made not insensible to pain, but superior to it, and to all the greater ills of existence. It soars above them. The knowledge and the belief that fill it furnish it with wings by which it is borne far aloft, even at the very time that the body is in the deepest affliction. Gracchus meets death with equanimity, and that is something. It is better than to be convulsed with vulgar and excessive fear. But it is a state of the soul very inferior to what exists in those who truly receive the doctrines which I have taught. I, Cleoras, look upon death as a release, not from a life which has been wholly evil, for I have, through the favor of the gods, enjoyed much, but from the dominion of the body and the appetites which clog the soul and greatly hinder it in its efforts after a perfect virtue and a true felicity. It will open a way for me into those elysian realms in whose reality all men have believed, a very few excepted, though few or none could prove it. Even as the great Roman could call that "O glorious day," that should admit him to the council of the gods, and the society of the great and good who had preceded him, so can I in like manner designate the day and hour which are now present. I shall leave you whom I have known so long; I shall be separated from scenes familiar and beloved through a series of years; the arts and the sciences, which have ministered so largely to my happiness, in these forms of them I shall lose; the very earth itself, venerable to my mind for the events which have passed upon it, and the genius it has nurtured and matured,

and beautiful too in its array of forms and colors, I shall be conversant with no more. Death will divide me from them all: but it will bear me to worlds and scenes of a far exceeding beauty: it will introduce me to mansions inconceivably more magnificent than anything which the soul has experience of here; above all it will bring me into the company of the good of all ages, with whom I shall enjoy the pleasures of an uninterrupted intercourse. It will place me where I shall be furnished with ample means for the prosecution of all those inquiries which have engaged me on earth, exposed to none or fewer of the hindrances which have here thronged the way. All knowledge and all happiness will then be attainable. Is death to be called an evil, or is it to be feared or approached with tears and regrets, when such are to be its issues?’

‘By no means,’ said Cleoras; ‘it is rather to be desired. If my philosophy were as deep and secure as yours, O Longinus, I should beg to exchange places with you. I should willingly suffer a brief pain to be rewarded so largely. But I find within me no such strong assurance.’

‘That,’ replied Longinus, ‘is for want of reflection. It is only by conversing with itself that the soul rises to any height of faith. Argument from abroad is of but little service in the comparison. I have often discoursed with you concerning these things, and have laid open before you the grounds upon which my convictions rest. But I have ever taught that consciousness was the true source of belief, and that of this you could possess yourselves only through habits of profound attention. What I believe I feel. I cannot

communicate the strength of my belief to another, because it is mysteriously generated within, interweaving itself with all my faculties and affections, and abundantly imparting itself to them, but at the same time inseparable from them in such a sense that I can offer it as I can a portion of my reason or my knowledge, to any whom I might desire to benefit. It is in truth in its origin the gift of God, strengthened and exalted infinitely by reflection. It is an instinct. Were it otherwise, why could I not give to you all I possess myself, and possess because I have by labor acquired it? Whereas, though I believe so confidently myself, I find no way in which to bestow the same good upon you. But each one will possess it, I am persuaded; in the proportion in which he prepares himself by a pure life and habitual meditation. It will then reveal itself with new strength every day. So will it also be of service to contemplate the characters and lives of those who have lived illustriously, both for their virtue and their philosophy. To study the character of Plato will be more beneficial in this regard than to ponder the arguments of the *Phædo*. Those arguments are trivial, fanciful, and ingenious, rather than convincing. And the great advantage to be derived from the perusal of that treatise is, as it shall be regarded as a sublime expression of the confidence with which its author entertained the hope of immortality. It is as a part of Plato's biography—of the history of his mind—that it is valuable. Through meditation, through inward purity, through the contemplation of bright examples, will the soul be best prepared for the birth of that feeling or conviction that shall set before you with the

distinctness and certainty of actual vision the prospect of immortality.'

'But are there, Longinus, after all, no waverings of the mind, no impertinent doubts, no overcasting shadows, which at all disturb your peace, or impair the vividness of your faith? Are you wholly superior to fear—the fear of suffering and death?'

'That is not, Cleoras, so much to ask whether I still consider my philosophy as sufficient, and whether it be so, as whether or not I am still a man, and therefore a mixed and imperfect being. But if you desire the assurance, I can answer you, and say that I am but a man, and therefore notwithstanding my philosophy subject to infirmity and to assaults from the body, which undoubtedly occasion me some distress. But these seasons are momentary. I can truly affirm, that although there have been and still are conflicts, the soul is ever conqueror, and that too by very great odds. My doubts and fears are mere flitting shadows; my hope, a strong and unchanging beam of light. The body sometimes slips from beyond my control and trembles, but the soul is at the very same time secure in herself and undaunted. I present the same apparent contradiction that the soldier often does upon the field of battle; he trembles and turns pale as he first springs forward to encounter the foe, but his arm is strong and his soul determined at the very same moment, and no death nor suffering in prospect avails to alarm or turn him back. Do not therefore, although I should exhibit signs of fear, imagine that my soul is terrified, or that I am forsaken of those steadfast principles to which I have given in my allegiance for so long a time.'

'We will not, Longinus,' said they all.

Longinus here paused, and seemed for a time buried in meditation. We were all silent—or the silence was broken only by the sobs of those who could not restrain their grief.

‘I have spoken to you, my friends,’ he at length resumed, ‘of the hope of immortality, of the strength it yields, and of its descent from God. But think not that this hope can exist but in the strictest alliance with virtue. The hope of immortality without virtue is a contradiction in terms. The perpetuation of vice, or of any vicious affections or desires, can be contemplated only with horror. If the soul be without virtue, it is better that it should perish. And if deep stained with vice, it is to be feared that the very principle of life may be annihilated. As then you would meet the final hour, not only with calmness, but with pleasant expectations, cherish virtue in your souls; reverence the divinity; do justly by all; obey your instincts, which point out the right and the wrong; keep yourselves pure; subdue the body. As virtue becomes a habit and a choice, and the soul, throughout all its affections and powers, harmonizes with nature and God, will the hope of immortality increase in strength till it shall grow to a confident expectation. Remember that virtue is the golden key, and the only one, that unlocks the gates of the celestial mansions.’

I here asked Longinus if he was conscious of having been influenced in any of his opinions by christianity. ‘I know,’ I said, ‘that in former conversations you have ever objected to that doctrine. Does your judgment remain the same?’

‘I have not read the writings of the Christians, yet

am I not wholly ignorant of them, since it were impossible to know with such familiarity the Princess Julia, and not arrive at some just conceptions of what that religion is. But I have not received it. Yet even as a piece of polished metal takes a thousand hues from surrounding objects, so does the mind; and mine may have been unconsciously colored and swayed by the truths of christianity, which I have heard so often stated and defended. Light may have fallen upon it from that quarter as well as from others. I doubt not that it has. For although I cannot myself admit that doctrine, yet am I now, and have ever been, persuaded of its excellence, and that upon such as can admit it, it must exert a power altogether beneficial. But let us now, for the little time that remains, turn to other things. Piso, know you aught concerning the Queen? I have not seen her since the day of her flight, nor have I heard concerning her that which I could trust.'

I then related at length all that I knew.

'Happy would it have been for her and for all, had my first counsels prevailed! Yet am I glad that fortune spares her. May she live to hear of Palmyra once more restored to opulence and glory. I was happy in her service. I am now happy, if by my death, as by my life, I can avert from her evil that otherwise might overtake her. For her, or for the Princess, there is no extremity I would not endure, as there have been no services I have not rejoiced to perform. The only favor I have asked of Aurelian was, to be permitted a last interview with my great pupils; it did not agree with my opinions of him, that I was denied so reasonable a request.'

‘Perhaps,’ said I, ‘it is in my power to furnish the reason, having been informed, since reaching Emesa, that the Queen, with her attendants and the Princesses, had been sent on secretly toward Rome, that they might be placed beyond the risk of violence on the part of the legions. He himself was doubtful of his power to protect them.’

‘For the sake of both am I glad to hear the explanation,’ replied Longinus.

As he uttered these words, the sound of steps was heard as of several approaching the door of the room. Then the heavy bar of the door was let fall, and the key turned in the wards of the lock. We knew that the last moments of Longinus had arrived. Although knowing this so well, yet we still were not ready for it, and a horror as of some unlooked-for calamity came over us. Cleoras wept without restraint; and threw himself down before Longinus, embraced his knees, and as the officers entered and drew near, warned them away with threatening language. It was with difficulty that Longinus calmed him. He seemed to have lost the possession of his reason.

The jailer, followed by a guard, now came up to Longinus, and informed him that the hour appointed for his execution had arrived.

Longinus replied, ‘that he was ready to go with him, but must first, when his chains were taken off, be permitted to address himself to the gods. For,’ said he, ‘we ought to undertake no enterprise of moment, especially ought we not to venture into any unknown and untried scenes without first asking their guidance, who alone have power to carry us safely through.’

'This we readily grant,' replied the jailer; who then taking his hammer struck off the chain that was bound around the middle of his body.

Longinus then, without moving from where he sat, bent his head, and covering his face with his hands remained a few moments in that posture. The apartment was silent as if no one had been in it. Even Cleoras was by that sight taught to put a restraint upon the expression of his feelings.

When these few moments were ended, Longinus raised his head, and with a bright and smiling countenance said to the jailer that he was now ready.

He then went out in company with the guard and soldiers, we following in sad procession. The place of execution was in front of the camp, all the legions being drawn round to witness it. Aurelian himself was present among them.

Soon as we came in sight of that fatal place, and of the executioner standing with his axe lifted upon his shoulder, Longinus suddenly stopped, his face became pale and his frame trembled. He turned and looked upon us who were immediately behind him, and held up his hands, but without speaking, which was as much as to say, 'you perceive that what I said was very likely to happen has come to pass, and the body has obtained a momentary triumph.' He paused however not long, making then a sign to the soldiers that he was ready to proceed. After a short walk from that spot we reached the block and the executioner.

'Friend,' said he now to the executioner, 'I hope your axe is sharp, and that you are skilful in your art;

and yet it is a pity if you have had so much practice as to have become very dexterous in it.'

'Ten years service in Rome,' he replied, 'may well make one so, or he must be born with little wit. Distrust not my arm, for it has never failed yet. One blow, and that a light one, is all I want, if it be as it ought, a little slanting. As for this edge—feel it if thou wilt—it would do for thy beard.'

Longinus had now divested himself of whatever parts of his garments would obstruct the executioner in his duty, and was about to place his head in the prescribed place, when he first turned to us and again held out his hands, which now trembled no longer.

'You see,' said he, in a cheerful voice, 'that the soul is again supreme. Love and cultivate the soul, my good friends, and you will then be universal conquerors, and throughout all ages. It will never betray you. Now, my new friend, open for me the gates of immortality, for you are in truth a celestial porter.' So saying, he placed himself as he was directed to do, and at a single blow, as he had been promised, the head of Longinus was severed from his body.

Neither the head nor the body was delivered to the soldiers, nor allowed to be treated with disrespect. This favor we had obtained of Aurelian. So after the executioner had held up the head of the philosopher, and shown it to the soldiers, it was together with the body given to our care, and by us sent to Palmyra.

On this same day perished Otho, Seleucus, Gabrayas, Nicanor—all, in a word, of the Queen's council, and almost all of the senate. Some were reserved for execution at another time, and among these I found, as I

went sadly toward the cell of Gracchus, was the father of Fausta.

The keeper of the prison admitted me with a more cheerful air than before, and with a significant shake of the head. I heeded him but little, pressing on to meet Gracchus.

‘So,’ I exclaimed, ‘it is not to-day’—

‘No,’ rejoined Gracchus, visibly moved, ‘nor to-morrow, Piso. Read here.’ And placing a parchment in my hand, turned away.

It contained a full and free remission of punishment, and permission to return immediately to Palmyra.

‘The gods be praised! the gods be praised!’ I cried as I embraced him. ‘Is not this better, Gracchus?’

‘It is,’ said he, with emphasis. ‘It is a great boon, I do not deny it. For Fausta’s sake I rejoice—as for myself, all is strictly true which I have said to you. But I forget all now, save Fausta and her joy and renewed life. Would, O would, that Longinus could have returned to Palmyra with me!’—and then, for the first time, Gracchus gave way to grief, and wept aloud.

In the morning we set out for Palmyra. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

I WRITE again from Palmyra.

We arrived here after a day's hard travel. The sensation occasioned by the unexpected return of Gracchus seemed to cause a temporary forgetfulness of their calamities on the part of the citizens. As we entered the city at the close of the day, and they recognised their venerated friend, there were no bounds to the tumultuous expressions of their joy. The whole city was abroad. It were hard to say whether Fausta herself was more pained by excess of pleasure, than was each citizen who thronged the streets as we made our triumphal entry.

A general amnesty of the past having been proclaimed by Sandarion immediately after the departure of Aurelian with the prisoners whom he chose to select, we found Calpurnius already returned. At Fausta's side he received us as we dismounted in the palace-yard. I need not tell you how we passed our first evening. Yet it was one of very mixed enjoyment. Fausta's eye, as it dwelt upon the beloved form of her father, seemed to express unalloyed happiness. But then again, as it was withdrawn at those moments when his voice kept not her attention fixed upon himself, she fell back upon the past and the lost, and the shadows of a deep sadness would gather over her. So in truth was it with us all—especially, when at the urgency of

the rest, I related to them the interviews I had had with Longinus, and described to them his behavior in the prison and at the execution.

‘I think,’ said Fausta, ‘that Aurelian, in the death of Longinus, has injured his fame far more than by the capture of Zenobia and the reduction of Palmyra he has added to it. Posterity will not readily forgive him for putting out, in its meridian blaze, the very brightest light of the age. It surely was an unnecessary act.’

‘The destruction of prisoners, especially those of rank and influence, is,’ said I, ‘according to the savage usages of war—and Aurelian defends the death of Longinus by saying, that in becoming the first adviser of Zenobia, he was no longer Longinus the philosopher, but Longinus the minister and rebel.’

‘That will be held,’ she replied, ‘as a poor piece of sophistry. He was still Longinus. And in killing Longinus the minister, he basely slew Longinus the renowned philosopher, the accomplished scholar, the man of letters and of taste; the great man of the age; for you will not say that either in Rome or Greece there now lives his equal.’

‘Fausta,’ said Gracchus, ‘you are right. And had Aurelian been any more or higher than a soldier, he would not have dared to encounter the odium of the act; but in simple truth he was, I suppose, and is utterly insensible to the crime he has committed, not against an individual or Palmyra, but against the civilized world and posterity; a crime that will grow in its magnitude as time rolls on, and will forever and to the remotest times blast the fame and the name of him who

did it. Longinus belonged to all times and people, and by them will be avenged. Aurelian could not understand the greatness of his victim, and was ignorant that he was drawing upon himself a reproach greater than if he had sacrificed in his fury the Queen herself, and half the inhabitants of Palmyra. He will find it out when he reaches Rome. He will find himself as notorious there, as the murderer of Longinus, as he will be as conqueror of the East.'

'There was one sentiment of Aurelian,' I said, 'which he expressed to me when I urged upon him the sparing of Longinus, to which you must allow some greatness to attach. I had said to him that it was greater to pardon than to punish, and that for that reason—"Ah," he replied, interrupting me, "I may not gain to myself the fame of magnanimity at the expense of Rome. As the chief enemy of Rome in this rebellion, Rome requires his punishment, and Rome is the party to be satisfied, not I."'

'I grant that there is greatness in the sentiment. If he was sincere, all we can say is this—that he misjudged in supposing Rome to need the sacrifice. She needed it not. There were enough heads like mine, of less worth, that would do for the soldiers—for they are Rome in Aurelian's vocabulary.'

'Men of humanity and of letters,' I replied, 'will, I suppose, decide upon this question one way, politicians and soldiers another.'

'That, I believe,' rejoined Gracchus, 'is nearly the truth.'

When wearied by a prolonged conversation, we sought the repose of our pillows; each one of us hap-

pier by a large and overflowing measure than but two days before we had ever thought to be again.

The city is to all appearance tranquil and acquiescent under its bitter chastisement. The outward aspect is calm and peaceful. The gates are thrown open, and the merchants and traders are returning to the pursuits of traffic; the gentry and nobles are engaged in refitting and re-embellishing their rifled palaces; and the common people have returned in quiet to the several channels of their industry.

I have made however some observations, which lead me to believe that all is not so settled and secure as it seems to be, and that however the greater proportion of the citizens are content to sit down patiently under the rule of their new masters, others are not of their mind. I can perceive that Antiochus, who under the general pardon proclaimed by Sandarion has returned to the city, is the central point of a good deal of interest among a certain class of citizens. He is again at the head of the same licentious and desperate crew as before; a set of men, like himself, large in their resources, lawless in their lives, and daring in the pursuit of whatever object they set before them. To one who knows the men, their habits and manners, it is not difficult to see that they are engaged in other plans than appear upon the surface. Yet are their movements so quietly ordered as to occasion no general observation or remark. Sandarion, ignorant whence danger might be expected to arise, appears not to indulge suspicions of one nor another. Indeed, from the smallness of the garrison, from the whole manner both of the governor and those who are under him, soldiers and others, it is

evident that no thought of a rising on the part of the populace has entered their minds.

A few days have passed, and Gracchus and Fausta, who inclined not to give much heed to my observations, both think with me—indeed, to Gracchus communication has been made of the existence of a plot to rescue the city from the hands of the Romans, in which he has been solicited to join.

Antiochus himself has sought and obtained an interview with Gracchus.

Gracchus has not hesitated to reject all overtures from that quarter. We thus learn that the most desperate measures are in agitation—weak and preposterous too as they are desperate, and must in the end prove ruinous. Antiochus, we doubt not, is a tool in the hands of others, but he stands out as the head and centre of the conspiracy. There is a violent and a strong party, consisting chiefly of the disbanded soldiers, but of some drawn from every class of the inhabitants, whose object is by a sudden attack to snatch the city from the Roman garrison; and placing Antiochus on the throne, proclaim their independence again, and prepare themselves to maintain and defend it. They make use of Antiochus because of his connection with Zenobia, and the influence he would exert through that prejudice, and because of his sway over other families among the richest and most powerful, especially the two princes, Herennianus and Timolaus—and because of his fool-hardiness. If they should fail, he, they imagine, will be the only or the chief sacrifice—and he

can well be spared. If they succeed, it will be an easy matter afterward to dispose of him, if his character or measures as their king should displease them, and exalt some other and worthier in his room.

‘And what, father,’ said Fausta, ‘said you to Antiochus?’

‘I told him,’ replied Græchus, ‘what I thought, that the plan struck me not only as frantic and wild, but foolish—that I for myself should engage in no plot of any kind, having in view any similar object, much less in such a one as he proposed. I told him that if Palmyra was destined ever to assert its supremacy and independence of Rome, it could not be for many years to come, and then by watching for some favorable juncture in the affairs of Rome in other parts of the world. It might very well happen, I thought, that in the process of years, and when Palmyra had wholly recruited her strength after her late and extreme sufferings—that there might occur some period of revolution or inward commotion in the Roman empire, such as would leave her remote provinces in a comparatively unprotected state. Then would be the time for re-asserting our independence; then we might spring upon our keepers with some good prospect of overpowering them, and taking again to ourselves our own government. But now, I tried to convince him, it was utter madness, or worse, stupidity, to dream of success in such an enterprise. The Romans were already inflamed and angry; not half appeased by the bloody offering that had just been made; their strength was undiminished—for what could diminish the strength of Rome?—and a rising could no sooner take place, than her

legions would again be upon us, and our sufferings might be greater than ever. I entreated him to pause, and to dissuade those from action who were connected with him. I did not hesitate to set before him a lively picture of his own hazard in the affair; that he, if failure ensued, would be the first victim. I urged moreover, that a few, as I held his number to be, had no right to endanger, by any selfish and besotted conduct, the general welfare, the lives and property of the citizens; that not till he felt he had the voice of the people with him ought he to dare to act; and that although I should not betray his councils to Sandarion, I should to the people, unless I received from him ample assurance that no movement should be made without a full disclosure of the project to all the principal citizens, as representatives of the whole city.'

'And how took he all that?' we asked.

'He was evidently troubled at the vision I raised of his own head borne aloft upon a Roman pike, and not a little disconcerted at what I labored to convince him were the rights of us all in the case. I obtained from him in the end a solemn promise that he would communicate what I had said to his companions, and that they would forbear all action till they had first obtained the concurrence of the greater part of the city. I assured him however, that in no case and under no conceivable circumstances could he or others calculate upon any co-operation of mine. Upon any knowledge which I might obtain of intended action, I should withdraw from the city.'

'It is a sad fate,' said Fausta, 'that having just escaped with our lives and the bare walls of our city

and dwellings from the Romans, we are now to become the prey of a wicked faction among ourselves. But, can you trust the word of Antiochus that he will give you timely notice if they go on to prosecute the affair? Will they not now work in secret all the more, and veil themselves even from the scrutiny of citizens?’

‘I hardly think they can escape the watchful eyes that will be fixed upon them,’ replied Gracchus; ‘nor do I believe that however inclined Antiochus might be to deceive me, those who are of his party would agree to such baseness. There are honorable men, however deluded, in his company.’

Several days have passed, and our fears are almost laid. Antiochus and the princes have been seen as usual frequenting the more public streets, lounging in the Portico, or at the places of amusement. And the evenings have been devoted to gayety and pleasure—Sandarion himself, and the officers of his legion, being frequent visitors at the palace of Antiochus, and at that of the Cæsars, lately the palace of Zenobia.

During this interval we have celebrated with all becoming rites the marriage of Fausta and Calpurnius, hastened at the urgency of Gracchus, who feeling still very insecure of life, and doubtful of the continued tranquillity of the city, wished to bestow upon Calpurnius the rights of a husband, and to secure to Fausta the protection of one. Gracchus seems happier and lighter of heart since this has been done—so do we all. It was an occasion of joy, but as much of tears also. An event which we had hoped to have been graced by the presence of Zenobia, Julia, and Longinus, took

place almost in solitude and silence. But of this I have written fully to Portia.

That which we have apprehended has happened. The blow has been struck, and Palmyra is again, in name at least, free and independent.

Early on the morning after the marriage of Fausta, we were alarmed by the sounds of strife and commotion in the streets—by the cries of those who pursued, and of those who fled and fought. It was as yet hardly light. But it was not difficult to know the cause of the uproar, or the parties engaged. We seized our arms, and prepared ourselves for defence, against whatever party, Roman or Palmyrene, should make an assault. The preparation was however needless, for the contest was already decided. The whole garrison, with the brave Sandarion at their head, has been massacred, and the power of Palmyra is in the hands of Antiochus and his adherents. There has been in truth no fighting, it has been the murder rather of unprepared and defenceless men. The garrison was cut off in detail while upon their watch by overwhelming numbers. Sandarion was despatched in his quarters, and in his bed, by the very inhuman wretches at whose tables he had just been feasted, from whom he had but a few hours before parted, giving and receiving the signs of friendship. The cowardly Antiochus it was who stabbed him as he sprang from his sleep, encumbered and disabled by his night-clothes. Not a Roman has escaped with his life.

Antiochus is proclaimed king, and the streets of the city have resounded with the shouts of this deluded

people, crying, 'long live Antiochus!' He has been borne in tumult to the great portico of the temple of the Sun, where, with the ceremonies prescribed for the occasion, he has been crowned king of Palmyra and of the East.

While these things were in progress—the new king entering upon his authority, and the government forming itself—Gracchus chose and acted his part.

'There is little safety,' he said, 'for me now, I fear, anywhere—but least of all here. But were I secure of life, Palmyra is now to be a desecrated and polluted place, and I would fain depart from it. I could not remain in it, though covered with honor, to see Antiochus in the seat of Zenobia, and Critias in the chair of Longinus. I must go, as I respect myself and as I desire life. Antiochus will bear me no good will, and no sooner will he have become easy in his seat and secure of his power, than he will begin the work for which his nature alone fits him, of cold-blooded revenge, cruelty, and lust. I trust indeed that his reign will end before that day shall arrive—but it may not—and it will be best for me and for you, my children, to remove from his sight. If he sees us not, he may forget us.'

We all gladly assented to the plan which he then proposed. It was to withdraw privately as possible to one of his estates in the neighborhood of the city, and there await the unfolding of the scenes that remained yet to be enacted. The plan was at once carried into effect. The estate to which we retreated was about four Roman miles from the walls, situated upon an eminence, and overlooking the city and the surrounding

plains. Soon as the shadows of the evening of the first day of the reign of Antiochus had fallen, we departed from Palmyra, and within an hour found ourselves upon a spot as wild and secluded as if it had been within the bosom of a wilderness. The building consists of a square tower of stone, large and lofty, built originally for purposes of war and defence, but now long occupied by those who have pursued the peaceful labors of husbandry. The wildness of the region, the solitariness of the place, the dark and frowning aspect of the impregnable tower, had pleased the fancy of both Gracchus and Fausta, and it has been used by them as an occasional retreat at those times when, wearied of the sound and sight of life, they have needed perfect repose. A few slaves are all that are required to constitute a sufficient household.

Here, Curtius, notwithstanding the troubled aspect of the times, have we passed a few days of no moderate enjoyment. Had there been no other, it would have been enough to sit and witness the happiness of Calpurnius and Fausta. But there have been and are other sources of satisfaction as you will not doubt. We have now leisure to converse at such length as we please upon a thousand subjects which interest us. Seated upon the rocks at nightfall, or upon the lofty battlements of the tower, or at hot noon reclining beneath the shade of the terebinth or palm, we have tasted once again the calm delights we experienced at the Queen's mountain palace. In this manner have we heard from Calpurnius accounts every way instructive and entertaining of his life while in Persia; of the character and acts of Sapor; of the condition of that

empire, and its wide-spread population. Nothing seems to have escaped his notice and investigation. At these times and places too do I amuse and enlighten the circle around me by reading such portions of your letters and of Portia's as relate to matters generally interesting—and thus too do we discuss the times, and speculate upon the events with which the future labors in relation to Palmyra.

In the mean time we learn that the city is given up to festivity and excess. Antiochus himself possessing immense riches, is devoting these, and whatever the treasury of the kingdom places within his reach, to the entertainment of the people with shows and games after the Roman fashion, and seems really to have deluded the mass of the people so far as to have convinced them that their ancient prosperity has returned, and that he is the father of their country, a second Odenatus. He has succeeded in giving to his betrayal of the Queen the character and merit of a patriotic act, at least with the creatures who uphold him—and there are no praises so false and gross that they are not heaped upon him, and imposed upon the people in proclamations, and edicts. The ignorant—and where is it that they are not the greater part—stand by, wonder and believe. They cannot penetrate the wickedness of the game that has been played before them, and by the arts of the king and his minions have already been converted into friends and supporters.

The defence of the city is not, we understand, wholly neglected ; but having before their eyes some fear of retribution, troops are again levied and organized, and the walls beginning to be put into a state of preparation.

But this is all of secondary interest, and is postponed to any object of more immediate and sensual gratification.

But there are large numbers of the late Queen's truest friends, who with Gracchus look on in grief and terror even, at the order of things that has arisen, and prophesying with him a speedy end to it, either from interior and domestic revolution, or a return of the Roman armies, accompanied in either case of course by a wide-spread destruction, have with him also secretly withdrawn from the city, and fled either to some neighboring territory, or retreated to the fastnesses of the rural districts. Gracchus has not ceased to warn all whom he knows and chiefly esteems of the dangers to be apprehended, and urge upon them the duty of a timely escape.

Messengers have arrived from Antiochus to Gracchus, with whom they have held long and earnest conference, the object of which has been to induce him to return to the city, and resume his place at the head of the Senate, the king well knowing that no act of his would so much strengthen his power as to be able to number Gracchus among his friends. But Gracchus has not so much as wavered in his purpose to keep aloof from Antiochus and all concern with his affairs. His contempt and abhorrence of the king would not however, he says, prevent his serving his country, were he not persuaded that in so short a time violence of some sort from without or within would prostrate king and government in the dust.

It was only a few days after the messengers from Antiochus had paid their visit to Gracchus, that as we were seated upon a shaded rock, not far from the tower, listening to Fausta as she read to us, we were alarmed by the sudden irruption of Milo upon our seclusion, breathless, except that he could just exclaim, 'The Romans! The Romans!' As he could command his speech, he said, 'that the Roman army could plainly be discerned from the higher points of the land, rapidly approaching the city, of which we might satisfy ourselves by ascending the tower.'

'Gods! can it be possible,' exclaimed Gracchus, 'that Aurelian can himself have returned? He must have been well on his way to the Hellespont ere the conspiracy broke out.'

'I can easily believe it,' I replied, as we hastened toward the old tower, 'from what I have known and witnessed of the promptness and miraculous celerity of his movements.'

As we came out upon the battlements of the tower, not a doubt remained that it was indeed the Romans pouring in again like a flood upon the plains of the now devoted city. Far as the eye could reach to the west, clouds of dust indicated the line of the Roman march, while the van was already within a mile of the very gates. The roads leading to the capital, in every direction, seemed covered with those who, at the last moment, ere the gates were shut, had rushed forth and were flying to escape the impending desolation. All bore the appearance of a city taken by surprise and utterly unprepared; as we doubted not was the case

from what we had observed of its actual state, and from the suddenness of Aurelian's return and approach.

'Now,' said Fausta, 'I can believe that the last days of Palmyra have arrived. . It is impossible that Antiochus can sustain the siege against what will now be the tenfold fury of Aurelian and his enraged soldiers.'

A very few days will suffice for its reduction, if long before it be not again betrayed into the power of the assailants.

We have watched with intense curiosity and anxiety the scene that has been performing before our eyes. We are not so remote but that we can see with considerable distinctness whatever takes place, sometimes advancing and choosing our point of observation upon some nearer eminence.

After one day of preparation and one of assault the city has fallen, and Aurelian again entered in triumph; this time in the spirit of revenge and retaliation. It is evident, as we look on horror-struck, that no quarter is given, but that a general massacre has been ordered, both of soldier and citizen. We can behold whole herds of the defenceless populace escaping from the gates or over the walls, only to be pursued—hunted—and slaughtered by the remorseless soldiers. And thousands upon thousands have we seen driven over the walls, or hurled from the battlements of the lofty towers to perish, dashed upon the rocks below. Fausta cannot endure these sights of horror, but retires and hides herself in her apartments.

No sooner had the evening of this fatal day set in, than a new scene of terrific sublimity opened before us,

as we beheld flames beginning to ascend from every part of the city. They grew and spread till they presently appeared to wrap all objects alike in one vast sheet of fire. Towers, pinnacles and domes, after glittering awhile in the fierce blaze, one after another fell and disappeared in the general ruin. The Temple of the Sun stood long untouched, shining almost with the brightness of the sun itself, its polished shafts and sides reflecting the surrounding fire with an intense brilliancy. We hoped that it might escape, and were certain that it would, unless fired from within—as from its insulated position the flames from the neighboring buildings could not reach it. But we watched not long ere from its western extremity the fire broke forth, and warned us that that peerless monument of human genius, like all else, would soon crumble to the ground. To our amazement however and joy, the flames, after having made great progress, were suddenly arrested, and by some cause extinguished; and the vast pile stood towering in the centre of the desolation, of double size as it seemed, from the fall and disappearance of so many of the surrounding structures.

‘This,’ said Fausta, ‘is the act of a rash and passionate man. Aurelian, before to-morrow’s sun is set, will himself repent it. What a single night has destroyed, a century could not restore. This blighted and ruined capital, as long as its crumbling remains shall attract the gaze of the traveller, will utter a blasting malediction upon the name and memory of Aurelian. Hereafter he will be known, not as conqueror of the East and the restorer of the Roman Empire, but as the executioner of Longinus and the ruthless destroyer of Palmyra.’

‘I fear that you prophesy with too much truth,’ I replied. ‘Rage and revenge have ruled the hour, and have committed horrors which no reason and no policy either of the present or of any age, will justify.’

‘It is a result ever to be expected,’ said Gracchus, ‘so long as mankind will prefer an ignorant, unlettered soldier as their ruler. They can look for nothing different from one whose ideas have been formed by the camp alone—whose vulgar mind has never been illuminated by study and the knowledge of antiquity. Such a one feels no reverence for the arts, for learning, for philosophy, nor for man as man—he knows not what these mean—power is all he can comprehend, and all he worships. As long as the army furnishes Rome with her emperors, so long may she know that her name will, by acts like these, be handed down to posterity covered with the infamy that belongs to the polished savage—the civilized barbarian. Come, Fausta, let us now in and hide ourselves from this sight—too sad and sorrowful to gaze upon.’

‘I can look now, father, without emotion,’ she replied; ‘a little sorrow opens all the fountains of grief—too much seals them. I have wept till I can weep no more. My sensibility is, I believe, by this succession of calamities dulled till it is dead.’

Aurelian, we learn, long before the fire had completed its work of destruction, recalled the orders he had given, and labored to arrest the progress of the flames. In this he to a considerable extent succeeded, and it was owing to this that the great temple was saved, and others among the most costly and beautiful structures.

On the third day after the capture of the city and

the massacre of the inhabitants, the army of the 'conqueror and destroyer' withdrew from the scene of its glory, and again disappeared beyond the desert. I sought not the presence of Aurelian while before the city, for I cared not to meet him drenched in the blood of women and children. But as soon as he and his legions were departed, we turned toward the city, as children to visit the dead body of a parent.

No language which I can use, my Curtius, can give you any just conception of the horrors which met our view on the way to the walls and in the city itself. For more than a mile before we reached the gates, the roads, and the fields on either hand, were strewn with the bodies of those who, in their attempts to escape, had been overtaken by the enemy and slain. Many a group of bodies did we notice, evidently those of a family, the parents and the children, who, hoping to reach in company some place of security, had all—and without resistance apparently—fallen a sacrifice to the relentless fury of their pursuers. Immediately in the vicinity of the walls and under them the earth was concealed from the eye by the multitudes of the slain, and all objects were stained with the one hue of blood. Upon passing the gates and entering within those walls which I had been accustomed to regard as embracing in their wide and graceful sweep the most beautiful city of the world, my eye met naught but black and smoking ruins, fallen houses and temples, the streets choked with piles of still blazing timbers and the half-burned bodies of the dead. As I penetrated farther into the heart of the city, and to its better built and more spacious quarters, I found the destruction to be

less—that the principal streets were standing, and many of the more distinguished structures. But every where—in the streets—upon the porticos of private and public dwellings—upon the steps and within the very walls of the temples of every faith—in all places, the most sacred as well as the most common, lay the mangled carcasses of the wretched inhabitants. None apparently had been spared. The aged were there, with their bald or silvered heads—little children and infants—women, the young, the beautiful, the good—all were there, slaughtered in every imaginable way, and presenting to the eye spectacles of horror and of grief enough to break the heart and craze the brain. For one could not but go back to the day and the hour when they died, and suffer with these innocent thousands a part of what they suffered, when the gates of the city giving way, the infuriated soldiery poured in, and with death written in their faces and clamoring on their tongues, their quiet houses were invaded, and resisting or unresisting, they all fell together beneath the murderous knives of the savage foe. What shrieks then rent and filled the air—what prayers of agony went up to the gods for life to those whose ears on mercy's side were adders'—what piercing supplications that life might be taken and honor spared! The apartments of the rich and the noble presented the most harrowing spectacles, where the inmates, delicately nurtured, and knowing of danger, evil and wrong only by name and report, had first endured all that nature most abhors, and then, there where their souls had died, were slain by their brutal violators with every circumstance of most demoniac cruelty. Happy for

those who, like Gracchus, foresaw the tempest and fled. These calamities have fallen chiefly upon the adherents of Antiochus; but among them, alas! were some of the noblest and most honored families of the capital. Their bodies now lie blackened and bloated upon their door-stones—their own halls have become their tombs.

We sought together the house of Gracchus. We found it partly consumed, partly standing and uninjured. The offices and one of the rear wings were burned and level with the ground, but there the flames had been arrested, and the remainder, comprising all the principal apartments, stands as it stood before. The palace of Zenobia has escaped without harm—its lofty walls and insulated position were its protection. The Long Portico, with its columns, monuments, and inscriptions, remains also untouched by the flames and unprofaned by any violence from the wanton soldiery. The fire has fed upon the poorer quarters of the city, where the buildings were composed in greater proportion of wood, and spared most of the great thoroughfares, principal avenues, and squares of the capital, which, being constructed in the most solid manner of stone, resisted effectually all progress of the flames, and though frequently set on fire for the purpose of their destruction, the fire perished from a want of material, or it consumed but the single edifice where it was kindled.

The silence of death and of ruin rests over this once and but so lately populous city. As I stood upon a high point which overlooked a large extent of it, I could discern no signs of life, except here and there a

detachment of the Roman guard dragging forth the bodies of the slaughtered citizens, and bearing them to be burned or buried. This whole people is extinct. In a single day these hundred thousands have found a common grave. Not one remains to bewail or bury the dead. Where are the anxious crowds, who when their dwellings have been burned, eagerly rush in as the flames have spent themselves to sorrow over their smoking altars, and pry with busy search among the hot ashes, if perchance they may yet rescue some lamented treasure, or bear away at least the bones of a parent or a child, buried beneath the ruins? They are not here. It is broad day, and the sun shines bright, but not a living form is seen lingering about these desolated streets and squares. Birds of prey are already hovering round, and alighting without apprehension of disturbance wherever the banquet invites them; and soon as the shadows of evening shall fall, the hyena of the desert will be here to gorge himself upon what they have left, having scented afar off upon the tainted breeze the fumes of the rich feast here spread for him. These Roman grave-diggers from the legion of Bassus, are alone upon the ground to contend with them for their prize. O, miserable condition of humanity! Why is it that to man have been given passions which he cannot tame, and which sink him below the brute! Why is it that a few ambitious are permitted by the Great Ruler, in the selfish pursuit of their own aggrandizement, to scatter in ruin, desolation, and death, whole kingdoms—making misery and destruction the steps by which they mount up to their seats of pride! O, gentle doctrine of Christ! doctrine

of love and of peace, when shall it be that I and all mankind shall know thy truth, and the world smile with a new happiness under thy life-giving reign !

Fausta, as she has wandered with us through this wilderness of woe, has uttered scarce a word. This appalling and afflicting sight of her beloved Palmyra—her pride and hope—in whose glory her very life was wrapt up—so soon become a blackened heap of ruins—its power departed—its busy multitudes dead, and their dwellings empty or consumed—has deprived her of all but tears. She has only wept. The sensibility which she feared was dead she finds endued with life enough—with too much for either her peace or safety.

As soon as it became known in the neighboring districts that the army of Aurelian was withdrawn, and that the troops left in the camp and upon the walls were no longer commissioned to destroy, they who had succeeded in effecting their escape, or who had early retreated from the scene of danger, began to venture back. These were accompanied by great numbers of the country people, who now poured in either to witness with their own eyes the great horror of the times, or to seek for the bodies of children or friends, who, dwelling in the city for purposes of trade or labor, or as soldiers, had fallen in the common ruin. For many days might the streets, and walls, and ruins be seen covered with crowds of men and women, who weeping sought among the piles of the yet unburied and decaying dead, dear relatives, or friends, or lovers, for whom they hoped to perform the last offices of unswerving affection ; a hope that was, perhaps, in scarce a single instance fulfilled. And how could any but

those in whom love had swallowed up reason once imagine that where the dead were heaped fathoms deep, mangled by every shocking mode of death, and now defaced yet more by the processes of corruption, they could identify the forms which they last saw beautiful in all the bloom of health? But love is love; it feels and cannot reason.

Cerronius Bassus, the lieutenant of Aurelian, has with a humane violence laid hold upon this curious and gazing multitude, and changed them all into buriers of the dead they came to seek and bewail. To save the country, himself and his soldiers from pestilence, he hastens the necessary work of interment. The plains are trenched, and into them the bodies of the citizens are indiscriminately thrown. There now lie in narrow space the multitudes of Palmyra.

The mangled bodies of Antiochus, Herennianus and Timolaus have been found among the slain.

We go no longer to the city, but remain at our solitary tower—now however populous as the city itself. We converse of the past and the future; but most of my speedy departure for Rome.

It is the purpose of Gracchus to continue for a season yet in the quiet retreat where he now is. He then will return to the capital, and become one of those to lay again the foundations of another prosperity.

‘Nature,’ he says, ‘has given to our city a position and resources which, it seems to me, no power of man can deprive her of, nor prevent their always creating and sustaining upon this same spot a large population. Circumstances like the present may oppress and over-

whelm for a time, but time will again revive and rebuild, and embellish. I will not for one sit down in inactivity or useless grief, but if Aurelian does not hinder, shall apply the remainder of my days to the restoration of Palmyra. In Calpurnius and Fausta I shall look to find my lieutenants, prompt to execute the commissions intrusted to them by their commander.'

'We shall fall behind,' said Calpurnius, 'I warrant you, in no quality of affection or zeal in the great task.'

'Fausta,' continued Gracchus, 'has as yet no heart but for the dead and the lost. But, Lucius, when you shall have been not long in Rome, you will hear that she lives then but among the living, and runs before me and Calpurnius in every labor that promises advantage to Palmyra.'

'It may be so,' replied Fausta, 'but I have no faith that it will. We have witnessed the death of our country; we have attended the funeral obsequies. I have no belief in any rising again from the dead.'

'Give not way, my child,' said Gracchus, 'to grief and despair. These are among the worst enemies of man. They are the true doubters and deniers of the gods and their providence, who want a spirit of trust and hope. Hope and confidence are the best religion, and the truest worship. I who do not believe in the existence of the gods am therefore to be commended for my religion more than many of the staunchest defenders of Pagan, Christian, or Jewish superstitions, who too often, it seems to me, feel and act as if the world were abandoned of all divine care, and its affairs and events the sport of a blind chance. What is best for man and the condition of the world, must be most

agreeable to the gods—to the creator and possessor of the world—be they one or many. Can we doubt which is best for the remaining inhabitants of Palmyra, and the provinces around which are dependent upon her trade—to leave her in her ruin finally and utterly to perish, or apply every energy to her restoration? Is it better that the sands of the desert should within a few years heap themselves over these remaining walls and dwellings, or that we who survive should cleanse, and repair, and rebuild, in the confident hope, before we in our turn are called to disappear, to behold our beloved city again thronged with its thousands of busy and laborious inhabitants? Carthage is again populous as in the days of Hamikar. You, Fausta, may live to see Palmyra what it was in the days of Zenobia.’

‘The gods grant it may be so!’ exclaimed Fausta; and a bright smile at the vision her father had raised up before her illuminated her features. She looked for a moment as if the reality had been suddenly revealed to her, and had stood forth in all its glory.

‘I do not despair,’ continued Gracchus, ‘of the Romans themselves doing something toward the restoration of that which they have wantonly and foolishly destroyed.’

‘But they cannot give life to the dead, and therefore it is but little that they can do at best,’ said Fausta. ‘They may indeed rebuild the temple of the Sun, but they cannot give us back the godlike form of Longinus, and kindle within it that intellect that shed light over the world; they may raise again the walls of the citizen’s humble dwelling, but they cannot re-animate the

bodies of the slaughtered multitudes, and call them out from their trenches to people again the silent streets.'

'They cannot indeed,' rejoined Gracchus; 'they cannot do every thing—they may not do any thing. But I think they will, and that the Emperor himself, when reason returns, will himself set the example. And from you, Lucius, when once more in Rome, shall I look for substantial aid in disposing favorably the mind both of Aurelian and the Senate.'

'I can never be more happily employed,' I replied, 'than in serving either you or Palmyra. You will have a powerful advocate also in Zenobia.'

'Yes,' said Gracchus, 'if her life be spared, which must for some time be still quite uncertain. After gracing the triumph of Aurelian, she, like Longinus, may be offered as a new largess to the still hungering legions.'

'Nay, there I think, Gracchus, you do Aurelian hardly justice. Although he has bound himself by no oath, yet virtually is he sworn to spare Zenobia—and his least word is true as his sword.'

Thus have we passed the last days and hours of my residence here. I should in vain attempt, my Curtius, to tell you how strongly I am bound to this place—to this kingdom and city, and above all to those who survive this destruction. No Palmyrene can lament with more sincerity than I the whirlwind of desolation that has passed over them, obliterating almost their place and name—nor from any one do there ascend more fervent prayers that prosperity may yet return, and these wide-spread ruins again rise and glow in their ancient beauty. Rome has by former acts of unparal-

leled barbarism covered her name with reproach, but by none has she so drenched it in guilt as by this wanton annihilation—for so do I regard it—of one of the fairest cities and kingdoms of the earth. The day of Aurelian's triumph may be a day of triumph to him, but to Rome it will be a day of never forgotten infamy.

LETTER XVIII.

FROM PISO TO FAUSTA.

I TRUST that you have safely received the letter which, as we entered the Tiber, I was fortunate enough to place on board a vessel bound directly to Berytus. In that I have told you of my journey and voyage, and have said many other things of more consequence still, both to you, Gracchus, and myself.

I now write to you from my own dwelling upon the Cœlian, where I have been these many days that have intervened since the date of my former letter. If you have waited impatiently to hear from me again, I hope that I shall now atone for what may seem a too long delay, by telling you of those concerning whom you wish chiefly to hear and know—Zenobia and Julia.

But first let me say that I have found Portia in health, and as happy as she could be after her bitter disappointment in Calpurnius. This has proved a misfortune, less only than the loss of our father himself. That a Piso should live, and be other than a Roman; that he should live and bear arms against his country—this has been to her one of those inexplicable mysteries in the providence of the gods that has tasked her piety to the utmost. In vain has she scrutinized her life to discover what fault has drawn down upon her and her house this heavy retribution. Yet her grief

is lightened by what I have told her of the conduct of Calpurnius at Antioch and Emesa. At such times, when I have related the events of those great days, and the part which my brother took, the pride of the Roman has yielded to that of the mother, and she has not been able to conceal her satisfaction. 'Ah,' she would say, 'my brave boy! That was like him! I warrant Zabdas himself was not greater! What might he not be, were he but in Rome!'

Portia is never weary with inquiring into every thing relating to yourself and Gracchus. My letters, many and minute as they have been, so far from satisfying her, serve only as themes for new and endless conversations, in which, as well as I am able, I set before her my whole life while in Palmyra, and every event, from the conversation at the table or in the porticos, to the fall of the city and the death of Longinus. So great is her desire to know all concerning the 'hero Fausta,' and so unsatisfying is the all that I can say, that I shall not wonder if, after the ceremony of the triumph, she should herself propose a journey to Palmyra, to see you once more with her own eyes, and once more fold you in her arms. You will rejoice to be told that she bewails, even with tears, the ruin of the city, and the cruel massacre of its inhabitants. She condemns the Emperor in language as strong as you or I should use. The slaughter of Sandarion and his troops she will by no means allow to be a sufficient justification of the act. And of her opinion are all the chief citizens of Rome.

I have found Curtius and Lucilia also in health. They are at their villa upon the Tiber. The first to

greet me there were Laco and Cœlia. Their gratitude was affecting and oppressive. Indeed there is no duty so hard as to receive with grace the thanks of those whom you have obliged. Curtius is for once satisfied that I have performed with fidelity the part of a correspondent. He even wonders at my diligence. The advantage is, I believe for the first time, fairly on my side; though you can yourself bear testimony, having heard all his epistles, how many he wrote, and with what vividness and exactness he made Rome to pass before us. I think he will not be prevented from writing to you by anything I can say. He drops in every day, Lucilia sometimes with him, and never leaves us till he has exhausted his prepared questions concerning you, and the great events which have taken place—there remaining innumerable points to a man of his exact turn of mind, about which he must insist upon fuller and more careful information. I think he will draw up a history of the war. I hope he will—no one could do it better.

Aurelian, you will have heard, upon leaving Palmyra, instead of continuing on the route upon which he set out toward Emesa and Antioch, turned aside to Egypt, in order to put down by one of his sudden movements the Egyptian merchant Firmus, who, with a genius for war greater than for traffic, had placed himself at the head of the people, and proclaimed their independence of Rome. As the friend and ally of Zenobia—although he could render her during the siege no assistance—I must pity his misfortunes and his end. News has just reached us that his armies have been defeated, he himself taken and put to death,

and his new-made kingdom reduced again to the condition of a Roman province. We now every hour look to hear of the arrival of the Emperor and his armies.

Although there has been observed some secrecy concerning the progress and places of residence of Zenobia, yet we learn with a good degree of certainty that she is now at Brundisium, awaiting the further orders of Aurelian, having gone over-land from Byzantium to Apollonia, and there crossing the Adriatic. I have not been much disturbed by the reports which have prevailed, because I thought I knew too much of the Queen to think them well grounded. Yet I confess I have suffered somewhat when, upon resorting to the capitol or the baths, I have found the principal topic to be the death of Zenobia—according to some, of grief, on her way from Antioch to Byzantium—or, as others had it, of hunger, she having resolutely refused all nourishment. I have given no credit to the rumor, yet as all stories of this kind are a mixture of truth and error, so in this case I can conceive easily that it has some foundation in reality, and I am led to believe from it that the sufferings of the Queen have been great. How indeed could they be otherwise! A feebler spirit than Zenobia's, and a feebler frame would necessarily have been destroyed. With what impatience do I await the hour that shall see her in Rome! I am happily already relieved of all anxiety as to her treatment by Aurelian—no fear need be entertained for her safety. Desirous as far as may be to atone for the rash severity of his orders in Syria, he will distinguish with every possible mark of honor the Queen, her family, and

such other of the inhabitants of Palmyra as have been reserved to grace his triumph.

For this august ceremony the preparations are already making. It is the sole topic of conversation, and the single object toward which seem to be bent the whole genius and industry of the capital. It is intended to surpass in magnificence all that has been done by former Emperors or Generals. The materials for it are collecting from every part of the empire, and the remotest regions of Asia and Africa. Every day there arrive cargoes either of wild beasts or of prisoners, destined to the amphitheatre; illustrious captives also from Asia, Germany and Gaul, among whom are Tetricus and his son. The Tiber is crowded with vessels bringing in the treasures drawn from Palmyra—her silver and gold—her statuary and works of art—and every object of curiosity and taste that was susceptible of transportation across the desert and the ocean.

It is now certain that the Queen has advanced as far as Tusculum, where with Julia, Livia, Faustula and Vabalathus, they will remain—at a villa of Aurelian's it is said—till the day of the triumph. Separation seems the more painful as they approach nearer. Although knowing that they would be scrupulously prohibited from all intercourse with any beyond the precincts of the villa itself, I have not been restrained from going again and again to Tusculum, and passing through it and around it in the hope to obtain were it but a distant glimpse of persons to whom I am bound more closely than to any others on earth. But it has been all in vain. I shall not see them till I behold

them a part of the triumphal procession of their conqueror.

Aurelian has arrived—the long expected day has come—and is gone. His triumph has been celebrated, and with a magnificence and a pomp greater than the traditionary glories of those of Pompey, Trajan, Titus, or even the secular games of Philip.

I have seen Zenobia !

The sun of Italy never poured a flood of more golden light upon the great capital and its surrounding plains than on the day of Aurelian's triumph. The airs of Palmyra were never more soft. The whole city was early abroad, and, added to our own overgrown population, there were the inhabitants of all the neighboring towns and cities, and strangers from all parts of the empire, so that it was with difficulty and labor only, and no little danger too, that the spectacle could be seen. I obtained a position opposite the capitol, from which I could observe the whole of this proud display of the power and greatness of Rome.

A long train of elephants opened the show, their huge sides and limbs hung with cloth of gold and scarlet, some having upon their backs military towers or other fanciful structures, which were filled with the natives of Asia or Africa, all arrayed in the richest costumes of their countries. These were followed by wild animals, and those remarkable for their beauty, from every part of the world, either led, as in the case of lions, tigers, leopards, by those who from long management of them possessed the same power over them as the groom over his horse, or else drawn along upon

low platforms, upon which they were made to perform a thousand antic tricks for the amusement of the gaping and wondering crowds. Then came not many fewer than two thousand gladiators in pairs, all arranged in such a manner as to display to the greatest advantage their well-knit joints, and projecting and swollen muscles. Of these a great number have already perished on the arena of the Flavian, and in the sea fights in Domitian's theatre. Next, upon gilded wagons, and so arranged as to produce the most dazzling effect, came the spoils of the wars of Aurelian—treasures of art, rich cloths and embroideries, utensils of gold and silver, pictures, statues, and works in brass, from the cities of Gaul, from Asia and from Egypt. Conspicuous here over all were the rich and gorgeous contents of the palace of Zenobia. The huge wains groaned under the weight of vessels of gold and silver, of ivory, and of the most precious woods of India. The jewelled wine cups, vases, and golden sculpture of Demetrius attracted the gaze and excited the admiration of every beholder. Immediately after these came a crowd of youths richly habited in the costumes of a thousand different tribes, bearing in their hands, upon cushions of silk, crowns of gold and precious stones, the offerings of the cities and kingdoms of all the world, as it were, to the power and fame of Aurelian. Following these came the ambassadors of all nations, sumptuously arrayed in the habits of their respective countries. Then an innumerable train of captives, showing plainly in their downcast eyes, in their fixed and melancholy gaze, that hope had taken its departure from their breasts. Among these were many women from the

shores of the Danube, taken in arms fighting for their country, of enormous stature, and clothed in the warlike costume of their tribes.

But why do I detain you with these things, when it is of one only that you wish to hear. I cannot tell you with what impatience I waited for that part of the procession to approach where were Zenobia and Julia. I thought its line would stretch on forever. And it was the ninth hour before the alternate shouts and deep silence of the multitudes announced that the conqueror was drawing near the capitol. As the first shout arose, I turned toward the quarter whence it came, and beheld, not Aurelian as I expected, but the Gallic Emperor Tetricus—yet slave of his army and of Victoria—accompanied by the prince his son, and followed by other illustrious captives from Gaul. All eyes were turned with pity upon him, and with indignation too that Aurelian should thus treat a Roman, and once—a Senator. But sympathy for him was instantly lost in a stronger feeling of the same kind for Zenobia, who came immediately after. You can imagine, Fausta, better than I can describe them, my sensations, when I saw our beloved friend—her whom I had seen treated never otherwise than as a sovereign Queen, and with all the imposing pomp of the Persian ceremonial—now on foot, and exposed to the rude gaze of the Roman populace—toiling beneath the rays of a hot sun, and the weight of jewels, such as both for richness and beauty, were never before seen in Rome—and of chains of gold, which, first passing around her neck and arms, were then borne up by attendant slaves. I could have wept to see her so—yes, and

did. My impulse was to break through the crowd and support her almost fainting form—but I well knew that my life would answer for the rashness on the spot. I could only therefore, like the rest, wonder and gaze. And never did she seem to me, not even in the midst of her own court, to blaze forth with such transcendent beauty—yet touched with grief. Her look was not that of dejection, of one who was broken and crushed by misfortune—there was no blush of shame. It was rather one of profound heartbreaking melancholy. Her full eyes looked as if privacy only was wanted for them to overflow with floods of tears. But they fell not. Her gaze was fixed on vacancy, or else cast toward the ground. She seemed like one unobservant of all around her, and buried in thoughts to which all else were strangers, and had nothing in common with. They were in Palmyra, and with her slaughtered multitudes. Yet though she wept not, others did; and one could see all along, wherever she moved, the Roman hardness yielding to pity, and melting down before the all-subduing presence of this wonderful woman. The most touching phrases of compassion fell constantly upon my ear. And ever and anon as in the road there would happen some rough or damp place, the kind souls would throw down upon it whatever of their garments they could quickest divest themselves of, that those feet, little used to such encounters, might receive no harm. And as when other parts of the procession were passing by, shouts of triumph and vulgar joy frequently arose from the motley crowds, yet when Zenobia appeared, a death-like silence prevailed, or it was interrupted only by exclamations

of admiration or pity, or of indignation at Aurelian for so using her. But this happened not long. For when the Emperor's pride had been sufficiently gratified, and just there where he came over against the steps of the capitol, he himself, crowned as he was with the diadem of universal empire, descended from his chariot, and, unlocking the chains of gold that bound the limbs of the Queen, led and placed her in her own chariot—that chariot in which she had fondly hoped herself to enter Rome in triumph—between Julia and Livia. Upon this the air was rent with the grateful acclamations of the countless multitudes. The Queen's countenance brightened for a moment as if with the expressive sentiment, 'The gods bless you !' and was then buried in the folds of her robe. And when after the lapse of many minutes it was again raised and turned toward the people, every one might see that tears burning hot had coursed her cheeks, and relieved a heart which else might well have burst with its restrained emotion. Soon as the chariot which held her had disappeared upon the other side of the capitol, I extricated myself from the crowd and returned home. It was not till the shades of evening had fallen, that the last of the procession had passed the front of the capitol, and the Emperor reposed within the walls of his palace. The evening was devoted to the shows of the theatres.

Seven days succeeding this first day of the triumph have been devoted to games and shows. I attended them not, but escaping from the tumult and confusion of the city, passed them in a very different manner—you will at once conjecture where and with whom. It

was indeed as you suppose in the society of Zenobia, Julia, and Livia.

What the immediate destination of the Queen was to be I knew not, nor did any seem to know even so late as the day of the triumph. It was only known that her treatment was to be lenient. But on the day after, it became public in the city, that the Emperor had bestowed upon her his magnificent villa, not far from Hadrian's at Tibur, and at the close of the first day of the triumph a chariot of Aurelian in waiting had conveyed her there. This was to me transporting news, as it will be to you.

On the evening of that day I was at Tibur. Had I been a son or a brother, the Queen could not have received me with more emotion. But I leave it to you to imagine the first moments of our interview. When our greetings were over, the first thought, at least the first question, of Zenobia was, concerning you and Gracchus. All her inquiries, as well as those of Julia, I was happily able to answer in the most exact manner, out of the fulness of your letter. When I had finished this agreeable duty, the Queen said,

‘Our happiness were complete, as now it can be, could Fausta and Gracchus be but added to our numbers. I shall hope, in the lapse of days or months, to entice them away for a season from their melancholy home. And yet what better can I offer them here? There they behold their city in ruins; here their Queen. There they already detect some tokens of reviving life; here they would have before them but the picture of decay and approaching death. But these things I ought not to say. Piso, you will be glad to learn the

purposes of Aurelian concerning Palmyra. He has already set apart large sums for the restoration of its walls and temples; and what is more and better, he has made Gracchus governor of the city and province, with liberal promises of treasure to carry into effect whatever designs he may conceive as most likely to people again the silent streets, and fill them with the merchants of the East and the West.'

'Aurelian, I am persuaded,' I replied, 'will feel upon him the weight of the strongest motives to do all that he can to repair the injuries he has inflicted. Then too, in addition to this, his nature is generous.'

'It is so,' said Julia. 'How happy if he had been less subject to his passions! The proofs of a generous nature you see here, Piso, every where around us. This vast and magnificent palace, with its extensive grounds, has he freely bestowed upon us; and here, as your eye has already informed you, has he caused to be brought and arranged every article of use or luxury found in the palace of Palmyra, and capable of transportation.'

'I could hardly believe,' I said, 'as I approached the great entrance, and beheld objects so familiar—still more, when I came within the walls and saw around me all that I had seen in Palmyra, that I was indeed in the vicinity of Rome, and had not been by some strange power transported suddenly to Asia. In the rash violence of Aurelian in Syria, and in this reparation, both here and there, of the evil he has committed to the farthest extent possible, you witness a genuine revelation of his character. Would that principle rather than passion were the governing power of his life!'

Although I have passed many days at Tibur, yet have I seen but little of Zenobia. She is silent and solitary. Her thoughts are evidently never with the present, but far back among the scenes of her former life. To converse is an effort. The lines of grief have fixed themselves upon her countenance; her very form and manner are expressive of a soul bowed and subdued by misfortune. Her pride seems no longer, as on the day of the triumph, to bear her up. It is Zenobia before me, but—like her own beautiful capital—it is Zenobia in ruins. That she suffers too from the reproaches of a mind now conscious of its errors I cannot doubt. She blames Aurelian, but I am persuaded she blames with no less severity herself. It is, I doubt not, the image of her desolated country rising before her, that causes her so often in the midst of discourse with us, or when she has been sitting long silent, suddenly to start and clasp her hands, and withdraw weeping to her apartments, or the seclusion of the garden.

‘It will be long, very long,’ Julia has said to me, ‘before Zenobia will recover from this grief—if indeed she ever do. Would that the principles of that faith, which we have learned to believe and prize, were also hers! Life would then still place before her a great object, which now she wants. The past absorbs her wholly—the future is nothing. She dwells upon glories that are departed forever, and is able to anticipate no other, or greater, in this world—nor with certainty in any beyond it.’

I said, ‘But doubtless she throws herself at this season upon her Jewish faith and philosophy. She has

ever spoken of it with respect at least, if not with affection.'

'I do not,' Julia replied, 'think that her faith in Judaism is of much avail to her. She has found pleasure in reading the sacred books of the Jews, and has often expressed warmly her admiration of the great principles of moral living and of religious belief found in them; but I do not think that she has derived from them that which she conceives to be the sum of all religion and philosophy, a firm belief and hope of immortality. I am sure she has not. She has sometimes spoken as if such a belief possessed likelihood, but never as if she entertained it in the way the Christian does.'

* * * *

You will rejoice, dear Fausta, to learn that Zenobia no longer opposes me; but waits with impatience for the day when I shall be an inmate of her palace.

What think you is the news to-day in Rome? No other and no less than this—which you may well suppose has for some time been no news to me—that Livia is to be Empress! It has just been made public by authority; and I despatch my letter that you may be immediately informed of it. It has brought another expression upon the countenance of Zenobia.

Curtius and Lucilia have this moment come in, and full of these tidings interrupt me—they with Portia wish to be remembered to you with affection. I shall soon write again—telling you then especially of my interviews with Aurelian, and of Probus. Farewell.

NOTE.

Priso, it will be observed, makes no mention of, nor allusion to, the story recorded by the historian Zosimus, of the Queen's public accusation of Longinus and the other principal persons of Palmyra, as authors of the rebellion, in order to save her own life. It is well known that Zenobia, chiefly on the authority of this historian, has been charged with having laid upon Longinus and her other counsellors, all the blame of the revolt, as if she had been driven by them against her will into the course she pursued. The words of Zosimus are as follows :

‘Emisam rediit et Zenobiam cum suis complicitibus pro tribunali stitit. Illa causas exponens, et culpa semet eximens multos alios in medium protulit, qui eam veluti fœminam seduxissent ; quorum in numero et Longinus erat.—Itidem alii quos Zenobia detulerat suppliciis adficiebatur.’

This is suspicious upon the face of it. As if Aurelian needed a formal tribunal and the testimony of Zenobia to inform him who the great men of Palmyra were, and her chief advisers. Longinus, at least, we may suppose, was as well known as Zenobia. But if there was a formal tribunal, then evidence was heard—and not upon one side only, but both. If therefore the statements of Zenobia were false, there were Longinus and the other accused persons, with their witnesses, to make it appear so. If they were true—if she had been overruled—led—or driven—by her advisers, then it was not unreasonable that punishment—if some must suffer—should fall where it did.

But against Zosimus may be arrayed the words of Aurelian

himself, in a letter addressed to the Roman senate, and preserved by Pollio. He says,

‘Nec ego illi (Zenobiæ) vitam conservassem nisi eam scissem multum Romæ: Reip. profuisse, quum sibi vel liberis suis Orientis servaret imperium.’

Aurelian here says that he would not have spared her life but for one reason, namely, that she had done such signal service to the republic, when either for herself or for her children she had saved the empire in the East. Aurelian spared her life, if he himself is to be believed, *because of services rendered to Rome*, not because by the accusation of others she had cleared herself of the charge of rebellion. Her life was never in any danger, if this be true; and unless it were, she of course had no motive to criminate Longinus in the manner related by Zosimus.

Longinus and his companions suffered therefore, not in consequence of any special accusation—it was not needed for their condemnation—but as a matter of course, because they were leaders and directors of the revolt. It was the usage of war.

Why are Pollio (the biographer of Zenobia) and Vopiscus (the biographer of Aurelian) and Zonaras all silent respecting so remarkable a point of the history of Zenobia? Pollio does not hesitate to say that she had been thought by some to have been partner in the crime of murdering Odenatus and his son Herod—a charge which never found credit in any quarter. Such a biographer surely would not have passed over in silence the unutterable baseness of Zenobia in the accusation of Longinus, if he had ever heard of it and had esteemed it to have come to him as well vouched at least as the other story. Omission under such circumstances is good evidence that it came to him not so well vouched—that is, not vouched at all.

Supposing Zenobia to have been guilty of the crime laid to her charge, could Aurelian have treated her afterwards in the way he did? He not only took her to Rome and gave her a palace at Tibur, and the state of a Queen, but according to some,* married one of her daughters. Could he have done all this had she

*Filiam (Zenobiæ) unam uxorem duxisse Aurelianum; cæteras nobilibus Romanis despondisse.—Zonaras, lib. xii. p. 480.

been the mean, base and wicked woman Zosimus makes her out to be? The history of this same eastern expedition furnishes a case somewhat in point, and which may serve to show in what light he would probably have regarded Zenobia. Tyana, a city of Asia Minor, for a long time resisted all his attempts to reduce it. At length it was betrayed into his hands by one of its chief citizens, Heraclammon. How did Aurelian receive and treat him after entering the city? Let Vopiscus reply: 'Nam et Heraclammon proditorem patriæ suæ sapiens victor occidit.'—'*Heraclammon who betrayed his country the conqueror wisely slew.*' But this historian has preserved a letter of Aurelian, in which he speaks of this same traitor:

'Aurelianus Aug: Mallio Chiloni. Occidi passus sum cujus quasi beneficio Tyanam recepi. Ego vero proditorem amare non potui; et libenter tuli quod eum milites occiderunt: neque enim mihi fidem servare potuisset qui patriæ non pepercit,' etc. He permits Heraclammon to be slain *because he could not love a traitor, and because one who had betrayed his country could not be trusted*—while Zenobia, if Zosimus is to be believed, whose act was of the same kind—only infinitely more base—he receives and crowns with distinguished honor, and marries her daughter!

'Zosime pretend,' says Tillemont, 'que ce fut Zenobie mesme qui se déchargea sur eux des choses dont on l'accusoit, (ce qui répondroit bien mal a cette grandeur d'ame qu'on luy attribue.)'—Hist. des Emp. t. II. p. 212.

The evidence of Zosimus is not of so high a character as justly to weigh against a strong internal improbability, or the silence of other historians. Gibbon says of him, 'In good policy we must use the service of Zosimus without esteeming him or trusting him;' and repeatedly designates him as 'credulous,' 'partial,' 'disingenuous.' By Tillemont he is called a 'bad authority.'

Nothing would seem to be plainer, than that Aurelian spared Zenobia because she was a woman; because she was a beautiful and every way remarkable woman; and as he himself says, because she had protected and saved the empire in the East; and that he sacrificed Longinus and the other chief men of Palmyra, because such was the usage of war.

Page 122. Piso speaks of the prowess of Aurelian, and of the songs sung in the camp in honor of him. Vopiscus has preserved one of these.

'Mille mille, mille, decollavimus,
Unus homo mille decollavimus,
Mille vivat qui mille occidit.
Tantum vini habet nemo
Quantum fudit sanguinis.
'Mille Sarmatas, mille Francos
Semel et semel occidimus
Mille Persas quærimus.'

The two letters on pages 135 and 137, it will be observed, are nearly the same as those found in Vopiscus.

On page 172, Aurelian is designated by a soldier under the nick-name of 'Hand-to-his-Sword.' Vopiscus also mentions this as a name by which he was known in the army. 'Nam quum essent in exercitu duo Aureliani tribuni, hic, et alius qui cum Valeriano captus est, huic signum (cognomen) exercitus apposuerat "Manus ad ferrum,"' &c.

Page 280. Piso represents Aurelian as wearing a crown. He was the first since the Tarquins who had dared to invest his brow with that symbol of tyranny. So says Aurelius Victor. 'Iste primus apud Romanos Diadema capiti innexuit; gemmisque et aurata omni veste, quod adhuc fere incognitum Romanis moribus videbatur, usus est.'

On the same page, in the account of the triumph, a chariot of Zenobia is stated to have been exhibited, in which it was her belief that she should enter Rome in triumph, which indeed had been made for that very purpose. This singular fact is confirmed by Vopiscus—'tertius, (currus) quem sibi Zenobia composuerat sperans se urbem Romanam cum eo visuram; quod eam non fefellit, nam cum eo urbem ingressa est victa et triumphata.'

